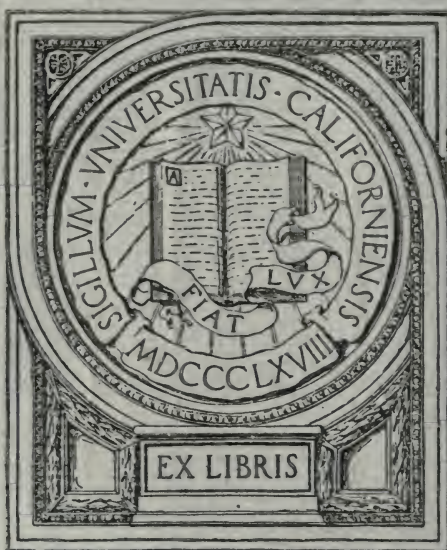


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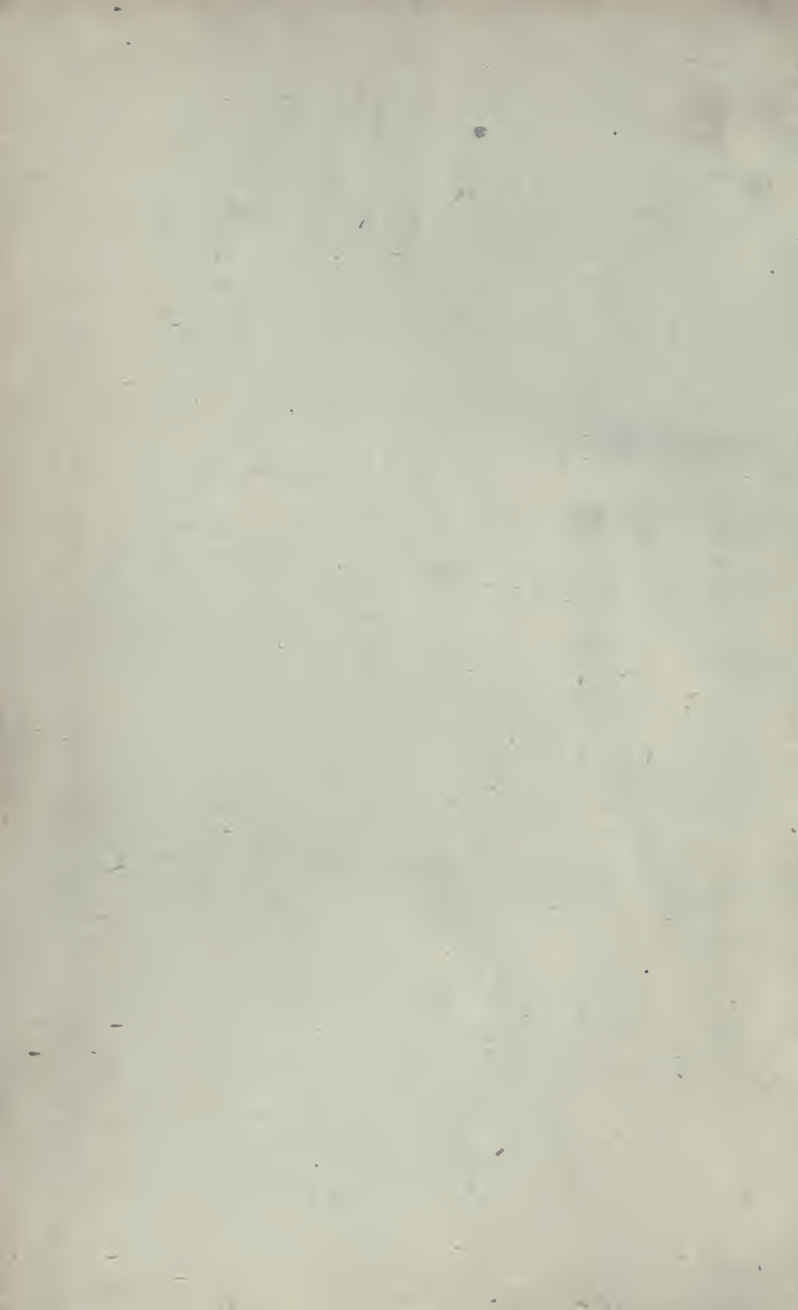
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A SELECTION OF TALES

ILLUSTRATING HEBREW LIFE.



NEW YORK:

OFFICE OF "THE JEWISH MESSENGER," 243 BROADWAY.

1870-5630.

TO VIND
ANTHONY

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BY J. DAVIS,

633 BROADWAY, N. Y.

P R E F A C E .



This little book is published in deference to a suggestion often made to the editors, that a collection of sketches from Jewish life, recounting the peculiar traditions, customs and modes of thought of the Hebrews, would be acceptable to the public.

The generation which is faithfully represented in such stories as the "Schlemiel" is passing away, and there is mingled with the interest attaching to it, at least the saddening reflection that its best side has been almost studiously concealed. The beauties of domestic life, of pure, sincere, family affection—the sublimities of uncomplaining patience amid sorrow, affliction and persecution—the noble examples of fortitude, brotherly-love and generous self-sacrifice—the lofty manifestations of a faith surpassing human knowledge—which the Ghetto has disclosed within the memory of thousands who now breathe the inspiring atmosphere of American freedom:—who has preserved these so as to strengthen in the minds and hearts of their descendants the waning respect and reverence for a down-trodden ancestry?

The history of the inner life of the Hebrews, excluded from the political equality which, at the downfall of feudalism, gradually and surely advanced throughout Europe, is yet to be written. The glimpses we have of their wonderful courage and faith, of their singular intellectual energy, create an eagerness to become acquainted with their true story.

Perhaps these little sketches, rescued from the fleeting pages of the newspaper, embodying the lighter, and occasionally the more sober, view of Jewish character, as exemplified in the generation now living in memory, may interest as well as amuse, and may stimulate the prevalent desire to learn "something more."

The editors are encouraged by the kindness and forbearance which they have ever experienced, to ask a favorable reception for this pioneer volume of a series of works illustrative of Jewish life.

. These stories were originally published in "THE JEWISH MESSENGER." "Anschel, the Schlemiel," was translated from the French by Prof. Solomon Woolf, of the College of New York,—the same gentleman adapting from a German legend the poem "Unable to Die." "A Tale of the Inquisition" is from the "*Matinées du Samedi*," (translated by Mr. B. Lemann); "The Tephillin" is from the German of *The Sippurim*, (translated by Mr. A. L. Sanger), "The Rabbi's Daughter" is based upon a story published in the *Israelit* of Mayence.

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ANSHEL, THE SCHLEMIEL.



ANSCHEL, THE SCHLEMIEL.

I.—DAWN.

Out of a hundred persons whom you should interrogate concerning the true signification of the word Schlemiel, without question ninety-nine would confess, whilst most politely raising their hats, their entire ignorance of it ; but the hundredth individual, who alone would be competent to afford you the necessary information, is no more nor less than your very humble servant. Now, although he cannot but acknowledge the rather self-satisfied tone of this remark, still, he is willing to submit to whatever reflections his assurance may induce, for the simple and sufficient reason that no one else could be found at all willing to assume the explanation in question.

Should a poor devil be remarked for his dullness or awkwardness ? Of such a person they are wont to say in the ghetto : "*He is a Schlemiel !*" The Schlemiel always manages to let his bread fall on the buttered side ; if others seize a favorable opportunity by the head, it is a matter of doubt whether the Schlemiel would be successful in catching it by the heel, and, even then, he would only allow it to escape. He meditates well, only what he badly performs ; he performs well, only what he badly meditates ; an adverse genius dogs his steps ; vulgarly speaking, he gets up, during his entire life, with his left foot foremost. As to any luck, he never gets more than a view of that part of it, which a general of an army loves to see of his enemy. Place gold in the hand of a Schlemiel, and the people of the ghetto solemnly forewarn you

it will turn into brass ; let him only retain this brass, and, with an equal seriousness, they will assure you it will metamorphose itself into common lead ; and, let us add, that, with this lead, it were impossible to mould a bullet good enough to blow one's brains out with. From this it is to be recognized how unfortunate he is who is born a Schlemiel. Nay, his lot exceeds misfortune—it is a *fatum*.

I demanded of myself whether it were not an undertaking, betokening temerity, to desire to describe a *fatum* of this nature, and I deliberated with myself for some time as to its advisability ; for, it might readily happen that, while playing with such an edged tool, it might turn against the historian himself, in such wise that, after having hastened the perusal of this veritable story to its last line, more than one of its readers would be constrained to exclaim : “ Here is a fellow who has composed the history of a Schlemiel, and he is a Schlemiel himself.”

Well, be it so ! the Schlemiel so depicted, and the artist who limns him, shall together be handed down to the same immortality ; for this fact is beyond peradventure, that *Schlemielery* is immortal, and the last man who, some day hereafter, shall quit this mundane sphere of ours, shall also, undoubtedly, be the last Schlemiel.

One day, the inhabitants of the ghetto had waited impatiently for some time to hear the three well-known blows of the wooden hammer, which the *Shamas** rapped against each door, in order to announce that it was time to repair to the synagogue. His unwonted delay was occasioned by a death in the street, and those of the pious who, without awaiting the *Shamas*' summons, had, nevertheless, repaired towards the synagogue, learned that during the night Rebb Isserl Gloser had suddenly expired of apoplexy ; upon the hearing of which, the greater number of the loiterers devoutly ejaculating : “ *Boruch Dayan Emes*,”† contented themselves with this expression of resignation, and continued on their several ways, for the morning was chill, and icicles hung on the eaves.

Below, standing before the large two-storied house,

* Sexton.

† Praised be the true Judge.

adjoining the butcher's shop, two men were to be seen, at an early hour, each with his *talet** under his arm, engaged in a long and animated conversation. One of the two, still youthful in appearance, replete with cunning, and gifted with a pair of keen, glowing and knavish-looking eyes, contemplated for a long time the windows of the apartment wherein lay the body of the dead man ; then he began :

"Bah ! Tell me, Koppel, how much time do you still grant him ?"

"Whom ?" demanded the other. "Do you mean the Rebb Isserl Gloser ? He has been dead but two hours."

"Ninny !" replied the first, "am I an ass that I know not what I say ? Have I lost my wits ? I am speaking of Rebb Isserl's son—of Schlemiel."

"By the prophet's rod," protested Koppel, "may I die if I understand you ; what do you wish to tell me concerning Schlemiel ?"

"Heed well my words," replied he of the shrewd features, whose eyes at this moment were lighted up by a singular expression, "heed well my words ; but, beforehand, truly inform me if it has ever been suspected by you that Schlome Katz has lied ; that he is a braggart, or is given to impose upon people ?"

To this question, Koppel, whose eyes twinkled, offered no answer ; he simply held his peace.

"Listen, then," pursued our cunning rogue, "and heed my words : before ten years have elapsed, you shall have the pleasure of beholding, at the windows of that very room, where Rebb Isserl Gloser is now stretched, a certain honorable individual, royally enveloped in a rich and luxurious morning-gown, like the administrator of our commune ; you shall, likewise, behold that aforesaid individual quietly smoking from a massive pipe, inlaid with silver, and, finally, that respected individual shall be known as Schlome Katz !"

"Are you mad, Schlome ?" exclaimed Koppel, shouting with merriment.

"Laugh to your heart's content," responded the other, "treat me, if you will, as a dol and liar ; say that I am

* Robe worn in Synagogue.

a fool who does not merit being spit at. Only recollect this : through that door shall I enter, out of that door shall I drive the Schlemiel, and, only afterwards, shall I don my morning-gown. Ten years hence, you may either chance or wish to pass by here, and then I shall recall my prophecy and apostrophize you thus : ‘ Koppel, what did I once say unto you ? Is this house mine, yes or no ? ’ ”

Schlome had spoken with some degree of animation. After having heard him to the end, Koppel gazed attentively into his eyes, and thus naively addressed him :

“ By the prophet’s beard, Schlome, I do believe it is ordained you shall succeed in all your undertakings. Not in vain were you named Schlome Katz ; like a cat, you have watched for Rebb Isserl Glöser’s death, and here you are now, quite prepared to spring upon poor Schlemiel. Spring, if you will, my dear Schlome, but take my word for it, with no such springs will you fall before the gates of Paradise.”

“ He is a Schlemiel ! ” Schlome sharply and curtly replied ; then he departed, threading his way through a narrow adjoining by-street. Koppel, on his side, went about on his way.

This was one of those conversations which affect the welfare and prosperity of a whole lifetime ; impossible to foresee or prevent ; speculating upon dreadful contingencies ; meditated and nourished in private ; a species of mental brigandage, ruthlessly operating upon and remorselessly destroying a future. The reader is, no doubt, by this time aware, that we are standing before Schlemiel’s house, and we can only regret that not a sound of these words has reached his ears ; since they would have benefited him far more than if his father had bequeathed him another house, and thousands of florins besides.

Our Schlemiel belonged to that class of creatures whom one meets only in the ghetto. Anshel was his veritable name, but, since he had attained his thirteenth birthday, the people of the ghetto recognized him by no other title than Schlemiel. But herein is the reason. Anshel had just reached his *bar-mitzvah*, that is to say, he had arrived at the prescribed legal age when, according to the rabbins, man is accounted capable of supporting the burden of the six hundred and thirteen command-

ments of God, traditional as well as additional. This day of initiation into manhood is, for every child, a period fraught with importance ; to it one may point as to a landmark, set up in the long journey through life ; around which cluster memories of happiness or sorrow, weeds or pleasant flowers growing by the wayside.

And so was our Anshel elated, this day, with all his joys, with all his emotions. It was the Sabbath. Anshel, in accordance with the custom, was obliged to read before the assembled congregation, in a loud and intelligible voice, the weekly chapter of prayers from the Thora.* It was not, as might be surmised, a task easily accomplished ; nay, many a professor, profoundly versed in the grammar of the Hebrew tongue, would have sacrificed much to have acquitted himself of such an undertaking. In the first place, it is to be remarked that in the Thora the words are not punctuated ; still further, while reading them, it is necessary to accompany their utterance by a species of chant, which has its measure and notes accurately and definitely determined ; an error is only too easily committed, particularly before an audience, who punish more vigorously each mistake in the reader, than a false note by a public singer would be condemned, seeing that the faithful are assembled, their prayer books open before them, the text accentuated and punctuated ; consequently, they detect, at the instant of its commission, any blunder in the reader. These are but a few of the shoals and breakers ahead.

But Anshel himself was devoid of all apprehension ; so confident, indeed, was he of his capability and preparation that, even in his sleep, he could not be deceived in a single iota of it. He had advanced, his heart replete with courage and determination, as the officiating minister called him to the almemar,† before the Thora. Too small to reach it, he had bravely mounted the stool, which the foresight of the Shamas had placed there for him. So far everything had passed off marvellously well ; a rabbi could not have performed it better. Anshel's father, Rebb Isserl Gloser, had already, on diverse occasions, blown his nose in token of his satisfaction,

* Book of the Law.

† Reading desk.

and had thus allowed his emotion to be observed. Above, in the gallery, allotted to the women, one of the participants in the ceremony bent so lowly over her book that she touched it with her face—perhaps to conceal her tears. For it was Anshel's mother. But, at the very moment when everything was progressing most favorably, Anshel, standing above and behind the Thora, perceived little Schlome, his elder by a few years, whose father had just administered to him a sharp thump in the ribs to recall his scattered senses; for, instead of listening to and attentively following the reader, he had preferred to cast his wandering eyes upon the women's gallery above, behind the railings of which appeared many a pretty head and shoulders. This circumstance so vividly impressed itself upon Anshel, that he lost both his soul and body's equilibrium at the same time, and tumbled quite heavily from the top of his stool. And then it was all over with his *bar-mitzvah*.

It was this accident which produced the greatest influence upon the life of our friend. In fact, when Anshel, utterly disconcerted and overcome, was withdrawing, he heard Schlome Katz, as he passed before him, whisper in his ear these words, while accompanying them with a hideous grimace:

“Why then are you such a great Schlemiel?”

Let us now introduce to our readers this self-same Schlome Katz, since he is to play no unimportant part in the life of our Anshel. Schlome, to begin with, was his personal enemy.

His enmity, to speak the truth, extended back to the grandparents of the two young people, and rested upon a very solid basis, neither more nor less than a house. The fact is, the house which was the property of Rebb Isserl, had formerly belonged to the Katz family. The grandfather of Schlome had turned out to be one of those careless and indifferent sort of men who preferred, the livelong year, to enjoy all the comforts and pleasures of life, rather than overburden himself with any work; furthermore, he had displayed so great a fondness for gaming that, in a short time, the beautiful two-storied house disappeared, a prey to the service of “*the king and ace*.”

In the ghetto, it was reported that Anshel's grandfather had won the place of him; a statement, however, entirely false, the truth being he had purchased it at a pitifully mean price. Suffice to say, the Katz family could never resign itself to the loss of that dear house, where they had all been born and bred. It was a wound which rankled and bled unceasingly, but at no time more strongly than on the Sabbath, whenever the elder Katz, after having enjoyed his customary siesta, beheld, through the windows of his own dwelling, the house which faced him on the opposite side of the street. Then, giving an indolent yawn, he would breathe forth a profound sigh, and thus address his better half: "By my faith, it strikes me my dead father—rest his bones—acted a little inconsiderately and precipitately in the matter of that house: it might just as well have belonged to us still, whereby I would not have been constrained to pay this never ending rent. Ah! formerly, people were but too wont to take little interest in the welfare of their descendants, and my poor father, to have obtained his good cheer on the Sabbath, would not have hesitated to have gotten rid of ten houses more into the bargain." Now, it will be readily understood how that, hearing these selfsame words repeated fifty-two times in the course of the year, Schlome should have felt them infiltrated, as it were, into the heart like so many drops of gall, and end by having them petrified therein? Often was he tutored: "Schlome, when you grow to be a man, it will become your duty to endeavor to restore that house to its rightful owners; for, you know, our neighbors opposite have robbed us of it." Thereupon, he would face it, at each successive repetition, with a vicious grimace which seemed to say: "Oh! only let me once become a man and I'll have it back again, you may be sure."

The more he grew, the more that animosity took deeper root in him; it became the settled aim and thought of his life, and was heightened by the difference in the characters of the two young people. The one was ungainly, awkward and timid. Schlome, on the contrary, was lively, alert and quick of speech. He had very early persuaded himself that it was his right and duty to make Schlemiel undergo all kinds of affronts, without in

any way troubling himself as to the results. Besides, it is in the nature of men of Schlome's stamp to find unsufferable the clumsiness and awkwardness of others. They are not accustomed to regard these defects of their neighbors as a punishment of heaven, but as a species of merchandize, scattered upon the highways of life, and at the service of the first comer.

The two youths, after their bar-mitzvah, had been put to business. Schlome immediately set about affairs in a most intelligent manner, and, in a very short time, he was rewarded for his assiduity by becoming a perfect adept in all the chicanery and rascality demanded by his trade. Thus, he had very soon excelled in holding and exhibiting to the best advantage, a piece of old stuff, in such a way that one was quick to conclude it was new; he was equally conversant with the method adopted in displaying a frayed silk, so as to conceal its blemishes; and, in short, all the tricks which tradesmen learn after a due apprenticeship, but which seemed, in his case, to be constitutionally and intuitively his own. He was a source of amusement to all who beheld him, when, at the fairs, now within, anon without, his booth, he cried across the market-place his *lazinj*, *lazinj*, *kupte*—here you are, for sale cheap—in such wise as to make the purchasers flock to him in crowds.

Then was he to be seen in the zenith of his glory, pinching the ripe cheeks of one peasant girl; patting the chubby hands of another; of a third demanding, with an air of tender solicitude, news of her worthy husband, Pan Waczlaw, or her little Honza. It must be confessed, however, that he was indifferently acquainted with the existence of either, albeit this trifling consideration in no wise prevented him expressing his friendly anxiety. By this mode of procedure, Schlome ordinarily attained a double result; the peasants voluntarily paid him a few pence more than to others, and, on the other hand, were accustomed, in speaking of him, to observe: "Little Schlome is a clever fellow; he will turn out a bright man."

How poorly, in business capacity, did Anshel compare with him. His *lazinj* sounded across the market-place in so weak and melancholy a tone, and in so hesi-

tating a manner, that no one expressed the slightest surprise at his inability to attract customers. And yet no one could question the goodness or sufficiency of his intentions; on the contrary, he had enough and to spare; only, as it often happens among people of his nature, his good intentions walked on such lofty stilts that he tumbled the more heavily each instant. Thus, did he desire, emulating the example of Schlome, to pinch the ruddy cheeks of some pretty peasant girl; he pinched them so rudely as to leave, a moment after, the heavy impress of his fingers on them; or, otherwise, he pinched them so lightly she did not feel him at all, and that was just as bad. Did he strive to gain a mother's good will? he invariably put his finger in her baby's eyes, or squeezed it until it turned black in the face.

Now Schlome accomplished everything to a nicety, and was rewarded by the good wishes and praises of every one, who attributed all his actions to his naturally buoyant and effusive nature. Anshel, on his side, rendered himself ridiculous in almost everything he undertook. "He is a Schlemiel," said Rebb Isserl, saddened and discouraged; his mother attempted no reply; she thought he would mend his ways. But as he failed to improve, Rebb Isserl reiterated: "He is a Schlemiel, and I should certainly like to know how I came by him." And again the silent mother offered no reply. Many years after, the old man Isserl, who, at the best, was no great talker, undertook to affirm: "I'll wager that one day he will be the ruin of our house; he is too great a Schlemiel!" The silent mother did more than not respond; for she was dead—and, to day, there is another death in the street. Anshel was still the Schlemiel we have seen.

II.—NOON.

Not a person in the ghetto could offer an explanation of Ansel's gestures of intense despair when, on the morrow, they laid the dead man in his tomb. So violently did he tremble in every limb, when the Shamas approached him, in order to cut a rent in his garments, according to custom, as a sign of mourning, that the knife pierced his hand and the blood spurted forth.

Upon beholding him in the state we have described, those who had taken part in the burial service, and who were wont to view matters only as they appeared superficially, began to question each other: "Why does he lament so deeply? Has he not reached his manhood?" But there are things which lie too deep for the world to see or to know; the great, silent sorrows of the heart, borne wearily to the grave.

There are moments when even natures constitutionally unhappy like Ansel's, grow to recognize their own miseries. He had felt, in that great moment of his grief, how irreparable had been his loss in his father's death. Before him stood revealed all his past life, all his awkwardness, all his clumsiness; never had the evil star of his destiny shone with such a sinister and threatening aspect. It seemed to him that the time had, at length, arrived when he should appear in his true character of Schlemiel, and that what had hitherto been himself was about to be buried with the dead. Suddenly, on raising his eyes, he beheld Schlome Katz beside him, who, with a terrible activity, was throwing into the grave handful after handful of earth. A bitter and sombre remembrance of youth crossed Ansel's mind; he seemed to be once more reading the Thora; he saw the overturned stool—and then he thought he heard the hoarse voice of Schlome Katz crying out to him; "Why then are you so great a Schlemiel?" This is why he trembled in so strange a manner, when the Shamas made the slit in his garment; it seemed to him that the knife was held by Schlome Katz in person.

During *schiver*,* Anshel reflected very seriously upon his past, and debated, poor fellow, with himself as to the possibility of amending his future, and becoming a different man. A thousand various plans suggested themselves to his mind, a thousand various plans were each in turn rejected ; only one he had determined to adopt—was he not a Schlemiel?—he concluded to get married.

In the ghetto there is but little difficulty in obtaining a wife. Already the *schadchan*,† Rebb Hasch, was engaged in this important business, for even during his father's life he had cast his plotting eyes upon him, and had marked him for his prey. One day he came upon Anshel, and, after quite a lively conversation, he proposed to him an excellent match. His decision was quickly taken ; he agreed that at the approaching *Hol emoed*‡ they should both betake themselves to Collin, to see his intended wife. For the rest, the affair was to be kept so profoundly secret, that no one should surmise what his intentions were.

The *Hol emoed* having arrived, Anshel found himself among a number of those who were also bent on matrimonial missions, in order to try their luck in obtaining young and pretty brides. Beyond the town, where the main roads started in their winding paths, a little one horse coach awaited the arrival of our friend, and stood prepared to convey him to the blessed abiding place of his promised bride, to the haven of his rest. Rebb Hasch, the *schadchan*, had been expecting him for some time ; for it was a thing, much to be desired, that the neighbors should not obtain the slightest clue or information of the place to which they meditated going.

And so they started upon their journey. Anshel was seated in the carriage, quiet and meditative ; he saw in his mind's eye, ascending as upon a new Jacob's ladder, the pretty image of his, as yet, unknown *fiancee* ; he met her but half way, and already he felt a better man. Meanwhile, his companion, Rebb Hasch, drew out his phylacteries, and began to offer up his prayers. Anshel had

* The week of mourning.

† Matrimonial agent.

‡ Days intercalated during the Passover and Feast of Tabernacles.

said his at home : he preferred to reserve the interval of his journey to reflection. Suddenly, at the very moment they were approaching an inn bordering on their road, the schadchan uttered a cry.

"What is the matter, Rebb Hasch?" inquired Anshel, unexpectedly startled from his pleasant day dreams.

"By my beard," shouted he, "there is Schlome Katz!"

"And then?" asked Anshel.

The Schadchan bowed his head ; he was plainly disconcerted and annoyed at encountering Schlome Katz upon his route, and, more particularly, upon this eventful day.

Before the inn, which they were rapidly approaching, stood a carriage drawn by two horses, which were, at that moment, being watered. Upon the threshold, there indeed stood Schlome Katz, whom the Schadchan's piercing eyes had immediately recognized. He was just about filling his silver-mounted pipe, and, employed in this operation, he discovered his fingers and their glittering rings.

"Malediction!" exclaimed the Schadchan, "he, also, is engaged in a matrimonial expedition."

"May Heaven assist you!" cried Schlome, as they passed him. "Where are you going, Anshel!"

Anshel blushed as red as a cherry on seeing his project thus discovered.

"Good luck to you!" said Schlome, grinning, "and, by the way, my dear fellow, try and not be—a Schlemiel!"

They were already far away from the inn ; still, Rebb Hasch continued to look uneasily back, whilst his countenance betrayed his inquietude. Anshel did not, in the least, comprehend this precaution.

"What is the matter? why do you persist in looking behind you, Rebb Hasch?"

"Because I fear that Schlome Katz will put himself on our track ; because he was in his holiday costume ; and, finally, because I was convinced he is also seeking a matrimonial alliance."

Hereupon he commanded the coachman to drive more rapidly ; and it was only upon finding himself a league in advance of his dangerous enemy, that he slackened

his speed, while his countenance began to re-assume its wonted serenity. The reason was plain enough ; he entertained fears for his match.

At noon they arrived at their destination. Anshel was hugely delighted at the effect his arrival had produced in the neighborhood. The truth was his countenance too plainly betokened that his errand was matrimonial in its nature. While Rebb Hasch was taking the initiative, in his position as ambassador for Anshel, by announcing to his parents-in-law his approach, Anshel himself remained at the inn awaiting the progress of events. Meanwhile, he was compelled to undergo a sharp interrogation on the part of madam, the inn-keeper : " Whence came he ? Whither was he bound ? What were his intentions ? " But he was as uncommunicative as a fish, not permitting the slightest hint to escape which might betray him. At length, the Schadchan reappeared, and whispered in his ear that everything was in readiness for his reception, and that his arrival was momentarily looked for.

On the road, Rebb Hasch instilled some excellent advice into his listener's mind, as to the manner in which he should comport himself in the presence of his intended : he should avoid eating much, but, to compensate for this deprivation, he should, in no wise, limit his talk, so that he should be set down, not for a gourmand, but for an intelligent and agreeable speaker. He ought to gaze full into the eyes of his future mate, in such wise as to make her blush at every moment ; the more she blushed the better, on the whole, might it be taken. He ought, in general terms, his wife being well brought up, to display his manifold knowledge of various matters and things, to converse in French, and, in other ways, exhibit his literary and scientific culture. These concluding details somewhat disconcerted Anshel ; however, he brushed up his courage and entered the house. But, at the very moment he was about to mount the stairs, he encountered, descending the same route, whom ? — Schlome Katz ! Anshel shivered in every limb as he recognized him. As to Schlome, he smiled with an amiable air, and said to him : "*Maseltoph !*"*

* Good luck.

Anschel stood stupefied on the stairway, uncertain what ought to be done. "He has forestalled me," thought he, "what is to be done?" However, he could not entertain that idea, seeing that he was individually a better match than Schlome. "She will take me in preference to him," said he, and, with a heroic determination, he opened the door.

He found the family all prepared for the reception. The father of his intended, in a friendly manner, preceded him into the room, while the mother, a stout woman with a rather imperative and decisive air, saluted him graciously in German. They entreated him to be seated, and the mother retired in order to prepare refreshments for their guest. During this interval, Anschel was obliged to submit to a searching interrogation from the father, concerning his condition, his family and his fortune. He only half replied to all these questions; what chiefly pre-occupied him was the desire to learn if his intended were handsome.

A moment after, the mother re-entered the room, accompanied by her daughter, who held in her hand a plate filled with cakes and confectionery, which she presented to Anschel. But he, instead of paying any attention to this proceeding, gazed intently into the black eyes of the young girl, and was so enraptured and fascinated, that he still continued to gaze and gaze, although for some time already, both plate, confectionery and bonbons had fallen from the girl's hand, and lay scattered upon the ground. The future bride laughed slyly, the mother looked at the wreck as if annoyed, and the father wound up with a hearty burst of merriment.

At table, they placed Anschel by the young girl's side. But the incident which had already taken place rendered him somewhat sober and gloomy, and so he maintained a sombre silence besides her whom he ought to have entertained and overcome by his affability and pleasant conversation. Instead of eating but little, he devoured everything before him, swept the table clean, without even leaving before him the moiety demanded by *darech erez*, that is, etiquette. The guests looked on with eyes that spoke volumes. Anschel saw all, but his evil star was in the ascendant, and he plunged deeper and deeper

into the mire. He did nothing, he said nothing, but what was totally opposed to the Schadchan's advice. Suddenly, he heard the mother observe in an under tone, in her daughter's ear : " He is, truly, a great Schlemiel ! " All the blood congealed in his veins ; he became alarmed, and, once in this frame of mind, his unhappy nature resumed its undisputed sway.

On withdrawing from the table, he was left alone with his intended. The father and mother had purposely departed ; and now, properly speaking, was the real *interview* about to take place.

Anschel's alarm exceeded all bounds, when he discovered himself face to face with her. Not a single word escaped his lips ; he seemed spell-bound, although the young girl appeared to await his introduction to the conversation. The perspiration started to his brow. Suddenly—and this was a real ray of light—he pictured to himself how Schlome would conduct himself under similar circumstances. *He* would not, thought he, hesitate taking her gently by the hand, pressing it tenderly, and accompanying it by some affectionate and endearing term ; and, wrapped up with this idea, he desired to pursue the same course. But, meanwhile, he had unconsciously approached so near the young girl, that she could not repress a violent cry :

" My corns ! my corns ! " she exclaimed, as she began, with loud lamentings, to limp around the room.

" What ! you have corns ? " demanded the terrified Anschel, " I didn't know it."

The young girl, half laughing, half weeping, still hopped about the room.

" 'Tis plain enough," said she, " that your companion, Katz, was right when he said——"

" And what did he say ? " inquired Anschel, bending to the blow.

" That you were a Schlemiel ! "

Anschel sought to hear no more. What more could be said to him ? The term Schlemiel was now a by-word with the young girl. And before deliberating what ought to be done, he had already hastened to the door, and slammed it behind him. He rushed down stairs, four steps at a time ; when, suddenly, he encountered Schlome.

"Well!" demanded the latter, "may we congratulate you?"

"Clown!" muttered Anshel, as he fled with all haste.

He was at first so utterly cast down, that he debated with himself whether he should return home or not; it was more than he could bear. What would they say when they should hear of this interview, which loaded him down with disgrace? Would Schlome Katz fail to seize the opportunity of making public his shame? The very idea of returning drove him well nigh to despair; he longed only to escape in flight. Impressed with this determination, he hastened from the town, while Rebb Hasch sought him on every side. He, on his part, was as inconsolable, if not more than Anshel; for were not his hard earned laurels as Schadchan concerned?

It was late enough at night when Anshel returned to the town; he only wished to seek his inn, harness his horse, and retreat homeward as expeditiously as possible. To accomplish this manœuvre, he was compelled to pass before the house of his intended bride. Bright lights glittered through the windows, and joyous peals of laughter echoed on the street.

"Even now," he communed with himself, "they are enjoying themselves at my expense; Schlome Katz is seated in their midst, and I suppose is, at this moment, repeating to them with infinite satisfaction: 'He is a Schlemiel, he is a Schlemiel!'" And, overcome with shame, he crouched as he darted by. On turning a corner of the street, from which a few steps would have brought him to his inn, he found himself before a little house, in which the light was still burning. "Perhaps," thought he, "there is *one* I seek within;" and prompted by an irresistible desire he approached the window. At first he only leaned against the wall; then, his courage reviving, he boldly peered into the room. He beheld an old man seated at the table, a book opened before him—doubtless a *Gemara**—and in which he seemed absorbed. The light stood near him; the rest of the place was shrouded in obscurity. Suddenly, Anshel heard a voice, full of sweetness, proceed from the corner of the room:

* Oral Law.

"Father," said the voice, "look here, please ; Fischele will not say his evening prayers."

Anschel strained his eyes in order to catch a glimpse of her who had just spoken ; for this voice touched every chord in his heart.

By good luck, the old man took up the light. "Look out, Fischele, I am coming after you!" and as he advanced, light in hand, the room became more and more illumined, until Anschel observed a young girl seated near a child's bed. As he saw the old man approaching, the child obeyed, and the girl proceeded to make him repeat the prayer after her, word for word, as she breathed it fervently forth in her own clear and melodious voice. When she came to this passage, "On my right stands the angel Michael, on my left the angel Gabriel," etc., Anschel, who had listened outside, absorbed in breathless attention, and wholly charmed with the beautiful group, was at a loss to understand why this prayer affected him so deeply on this evening ; it seemed to him that, until now, he had been taught to repeat it only mechanically and incompletely, while, as he heard it then uttered by the pure lips of this innocent girl, a new meaning, a new force was imparted to it, and he felt it was not an appeal in vain.

Suddenly the little boy cried out: "There is some one looking through the window!" and immediately hid his head beneath the coverlet. Anschel might easily have escaped detection, but his courage failed him ; a voice like to that of the young girl seemed to call out to him—remain. He distinctly heard the door facing the street open ; he heard himself called ; instead of replying, he followed in the steps of the young girl ; and, before he had time to recover from his surprise, found himself within the room.

In a short time, he became accustomed to his odd position, made himself perfectly at home, and remained seated at his ease, as if he had known the family for years. Nay, so thoroughly delighted was he with his adventure, that he never gave a thought upon the propriety of retiring. The father was *shochet* to the commune, that is to say, he slaughtered, according to the Mosaic laws, both beasts and birds. His daughter,

Esther by name, was both good, industrious and pious, and excited such admiration in our friend that he could scarce withdraw his gaze from her downcast face. And as he looked, his own face brightened, and he communed with himself : " If you should become engaged to this girl ! You cannot return without a promised wife ; besides, in taking this young girl, you perform, at once, a kind and meritorious action. Her entire affection will be centred in you, and, certainly, never will she entertain the idea of calling you Schlemiel."

No sooner thought than done. He demanded, much to the astonishment of both father and daughter, the hand of Esther as his bride. But their astonishment was changed into delight when he communicated to them his name and condition. Standing there beside her, for once a proud and happy man, his whole face illumined by the new passion which had entered his soul, he drew the trembling girl towards him, and asked her if *her* consent were given. She, blushing and hanging low her head, answered in scarce a whisper : " I do not think that I dislike you," and so was silent.

Fischele, who had been a witness to all that had been said and done, sprang with many an antic from the bed, whilst shouting :

" Oh ! I am going to let every one know Esther is engaged to be married."

" There will be time enough to-morrow," said Esther.

" No, no, let him alone," entreated the happy Anshel ; " let the contract be immediately drawn up."

In the presence of the family council, summoned by Fischele and assembled during the evening, Anshel was formally declared the *Chosan** of Esther. As to any other agreement or arrangement, nothing was to be done, for the Shochet of the commune was too poor to bestow any dowry upon his daughter.

Ah ! was not this a noble example of romantic heroism in the life of our Schlemiel ? But what will the ghetto say ? Already I hear their shouts of sarcastic laughter, and see their mockery and their raillery.

* Betrothed

III.—NIGHT.

A year after, Anshel led Esther to his home as his wife. The marriage ceremony had been performed joyously, and celebrated amidst all the happiness and revelry which its advent demanded, and now, for the first time, was the youthful bride about to be conducted to the synagogue, an important and traditional ceremony among the people.

As might be expected, this was an occasion which the amiable gossips—those social hawks, ready to pounce upon and rend to pieces—could not well permit to escape them, and so they repaired in full force to the synagogue, satisfying at once their consciences by this liberal display of piety and their instincts by the opportunity afforded of tearing their poor and unresisting prey.

“Have you seen Schlemiel’s wife yet?” demanded one.

“Not I,” replied the other; “what sort of a creature is she?”

“Of course, just what the wife of a Schlemiel ought to be. The barrel always smells of the herring.”

“What do you mean?”

“Oh! only that she has a hump large enough to build a house upon.”

“It’s my opinion,” chimed in a third, “he would have done as well here, without taking the trouble to go such a distance, and for such a *thing*. And then, after all, to think she hasn’t a florin to her name.”

“Why, bless your heart, the very chemise and dress she has got on came out of his pocket.”

“As for her gold chain, every one knows that he bought that at Hirsch, the jeweler’s, for a hundred florins.”

“Well, what would you have?” added another, with an air of sanctified resignation. “Once a Schlemiel always a Schlemiel; and he can’t alter the case.”

How far this amiable conversation would have been carried, and how much of the poor girl would have escaped their beaks, it is impossible to say, had not the sounds of a joyous refrain suddenly interrupted them.

Soon after, a long file of married men, clad in holiday costume, appeared, turning the corner of the street leading to the synagogue. Anshel to-day, for the first time, attended *schule** in his position of *balbos*.† He approached, his countenance radiant with happiness, between two friends, who had also officiated at his marriage, and had conducted him beneath the *choupe*.‡ To have beheld him at that moment, no one would have thought of demanding, who, in the wide world, was the most contented of mortals.

Behind him, already his wife for two days, came Esther, with downcast head, amidst a bevy of young and old women, who esteemed it a duty to accompany the newly made wife, betaking herself, for the first time, to the synagogue. Music, light and mirthful, echoed along the street; and, wherever she passed, the windows flew open, and a score of inquisitive heads peeping out, said: "Come, let us see what this Schlemiel's wife is really like!"

Having reached the synagogue, the music ceased, and the young married couple entered, followed by their cortege. Anshel, as he moved along towards his seat, was saluted on all sides with the cry of *maseltoph*.|| When the weekly chapter had been read, the *chasan*§ called Anshel before the Thora, accompanying this call with a solemn chant. Happy and auspicious moment, thrice happy, when even the remembrance of youth and manhood were blotted from his memory!

Meanwhile, following an old established custom, and one impossible to avoid, Esther, in the woman's gallery above, distributed Corinth raisins and sweetmeats to the assembled people. Although in the midst of utter strangers, where no sympathy was to be expected, and none was found, still they exacted from her all the obligations of *derech eretz*, as, amidst their sneers, their laughter, and their ridicule, she committed fault after fault.

"Not the slightest conception of good society!" said the wife of the administrator of the commune, curling her lips with an air of complete contempt.

* Synagogue. † Old member. ‡ Canopy used at weddings.
 || Good luck. § Minister.

Par parenthese, it must be known, that Esther, who was wholly unacquainted with her person, had approached another woman, and had presented to her the plate filled with *bûnbons*, before paying this sign of respect to the first.

"What could you expect, my dear Madame Gitel?" remarked a neighbor, who considered herself no less injured! "Think you a woman can learn good breeding among geese and ducks? At home, she has nothing else to do but watch for the poultry sent to her father to be killed. How can you expect her to know better?"

"Yes, and she even scrubbed the dirty floors at her father's," sneered another.

"Do you not see, Madame Gitel, that she still carries the signs of her drudgery with her? Besides that little hump well becomes her," added a small, weak-haired and weak-eyed woman, breaking into a fit of laughter, to which the rest lent their voices.

These remarks were not pronounced in so low a tone but that the poor woman, against whom they were directed, heard them all, and distinctly. Nothing so sharpens our senses as the excitement resulting from being placed in unusual circumstances. Then, every sense is, so to speak, on the look out, and our soul extends itself into a thousand different channels. Singular to remark, it suffers less, at seeing itself reproached with its real faults and ignorance of customs, than at hearing attributed to it defects which it does not really possess. So with Esther. Beyond, in truth, an almost imperceptible inequality in the height of the left shoulder, which the cruel and piercing eyes of a woman alone could have so readily detected, there was absolutely nothing in her appearance which could be pronounced a blemish.

Weighted down with insufferable shame, she felt her remaining strength desert her, as, with wild and uncertain air, she wandered through the throng of women who pressed forward on all sides to wish her welcome. Amidst such circumstances, where she was in need of all her senses, she committed fault after fault against the rules of *derech erez*.

In the synagogues there are neither the grand and majestic tones of the organ, nor the delicate fumes of in-

cense, nor sackbuts wherewith to subdue, alleviate or exalt the soul, and make it cease to remember its anguish and its sorrows. Here, the silent tear cannot fall, nor the sigh nor sob be uttered unless the world should see and know it all. And Esther wept, wept tears of inquietude and embarrassment ; amidst all these whisperings, all this laughter and ridicule, she believed she beheld herself mocked and pointed at as some dreadfully deformed wretch, and she thought, at length, that she was really so.

The service was over, and Anshel returned homeward with his wife, while the music, as before, preceded them on their way with its merry strains. Esther was silent, sad, and deeply afflicted ; he demanded of her the cause of her seeming trouble ; to which her mute, appealing and upturned face, the eyes still glittering with their heavy tears, was her only reply ; but, as he continued to repeat his question, sobbing, she responded :

" Oh ! do not ask me, Anshel, do not ask me ; if you had but heard what they said ! "

" Stay ! " said he, with a profound sigh, in which were blended resignation, anguish and despair, " Stay, my wife, speak not to me. Oh ! Esther, let there be no word, at least, upon this subject. "

And so silently, hand in hand, they wended their steps along ; Esther spoke not, from womanly vanity, perchance ; Anshel, because his soul abhorred to hear pronounced by her to whom he had forever united himself, the sad, the weary, the gloomy formula of his destiny.

Was it not a truly melancholy sight, thus to behold all the efforts and struggles, all the good resolutions matured through many a sleepless night, adopted as a last resource and reliance, was it not a melancholy sight to see these cast aside, overcome by the omnipotence of prejudice ? Often, in the battle of life, fought on many a bloody field, when, breathless with the contest, the enemy seemingly overthrown, you rest and dream of future quiet and happiness, how often does the dreaded serpent of prejudice raise his crested head again, recalled by his own blood into renewed life and vigor ? Oh ! it is, indeed, immortal. Many a weary year had flown by, and still our friend had failed to make the least advance in public opin-

ion ; on the contrary, he lost ground more and more each day.

No one wished to transact business with him, for was not the malediction of Heaven plainly visited upon a Schlemiel? Had he silver? Did it not turn into lead? Or a good idea? Did it not end in discomfiture? Or did he calculate upon a certain profit? Did not this profit escape him? Who, then, in view of this, could desire to enter into any business relations with him? Who would seek to attach the bark of his own existence to the *debris* of a vessel, wrecked and fatally predestined to misfortune?

Anschel perceived, on all sides, the general aversion of which he was the object. In no way could he give satisfaction. Often on Sunday, when the traders were going to business, might Anschel have been seen, resting tranquilly in the street. Then they said: "What does he do here? while he is standing idle, business is done under his very nose." If, on the other hand, he preceded the others, they were wont to remark: "What ardor! wouldn't you think that he was afraid of losing his engagement?" Often he returned from his rounds while it was still Thursday, impatient to behold once more his dear wife and children. "Why does he return of a Thursday?" was the next query. And if, in order to concede to them, he did not return until late on Friday, when the lights were already burning in honor of the Sabbath, they continued to reproach him: "He is not only a Schlemiel, but even a *Posche-Israel*."

Thus, on every side, they fell upon Anschel, as, on every side, they equally avoided him; and, as he could in no wise satisfy the people, he finished by doing nothing at all—and herein was his ill fortune.

It were difficult to decide exactly when or how his ill fortune began or ended. In a very short time, the inheritance of Rebb Isserl had disappeared, to the entire wonderment of Anschel. For a long time, already, had he known the progress and intentions of Schlome; for this latter made no hesitation in informing all, who would give ear to him, that he had engaged the workmen to repair *his* house, and that he only awaited an *opportune moment*. Of course, with commendable kindness, they hastened to inform Anschel of these words, and to add

thereto, as their prolific minds suggested, other remarks which fell like so many drops of scalding water on his soul. He could do no more than redouble his efforts.

But it was all in vain ; Schlome Katz was on his track like a blood hound. Had he for a long time meditated some happy speculation ? he might rest assured that Schlome had got wind of it and forestalled him. Had he a business appointment for five o'clock ? Schlome had already, at three, settled it for him. A thousand demons seemed to note his inmost thoughts and carry them, at once, to Schlome.

Meanwhile, Schlome had espoused the beautiful Colli-nese who had occasion to remember, for so long a time, her first interview with Anshel. Although he possessed absolutely nothing in his own right, still no one hesitated to give to him, since it was plainly evident he was a fellow of remarkable tact and capability, and thus had he realized the prediction of the ghetto : " Schlome had made his mark."

From time to time, while returning homeward on the Friday, Anshel and Schlome would encounter each other at the entrance to the ghetto.

" Well ! is business prosperous ?" constantly demanded the latter, slapping his leathern girdle full of money.

" I am thoroughly prostrated with fatigue ; but, 'tis all the same, the house shall not be yours ; you are only going to useless trouble."

But, alas ! of what avail, however heroically, to struggle against a power confessedly superior ? When misfortune pursues a poor wretch, it prides itself neither upon generosity nor humanity ; it attacks, at once, front and rear.

Anshel finally came to the conclusion that *alone* there would be no business success for him ; he thought of taking a partner ; but, unfortunately, there was no one of his acquaintance who had the slightest desire to associate himself with him. He prayed, he entreated, his appeals were in vain ; he addressed himself to the deaf, and reaped for his reward naught but replies replete with gall and bitterness. However, when all hope had vanished, he did succeed in obtaining a partner who would *try* the thing with him. It is true, the partner in question had

not, exactly, much to risk ; for the conditions were that Anshel should furnish the capital and he the brains, and the profits should be shared equally between them. But it made no difference ; Anshel was in the seventh heaven at his good fortune in securing a partner.

At the start all went well. Six months having passed, the partner took his share of the profits, while Anshel let his remain in the common stock. Hard times followed, and, although affairs afterwards took a favorable turn, still the final result was the same. The gold turned into brass, and the brass into lead.

When Anshel and his companion balanced their account at the end of the year, both found themselves far from their reckonings ; so that the latter, exasperated beyond all bounds, pounded with his clenched fist the table, and taunted him with being nothing but a Schlemiel, a miserable Schlemiel. He attributed to Anshel all the ill success of the enterprise, and only regretted one thing—that he was fool enough to *put any confidence* in him ; then, with an air of desperation, he rose and departed in a whirlwind of rage. The Saturday following, Esther appeared in the synagogue without, this time, wearing the customary golden chain about her neck.

“What has she done with her chain?” inquired one in her neighbor’s ear.

“She has pawned it to Hirsch, the jeweler.”

“Already?”

“What else ought you to expect from such a Schlemiel?”

However, Schlome Katz seemed to await patiently the *opportune moment* before tightening his hold upon *his* house. Quite frequently was he heard to repeat : “If he do not wish to yield with a good grace, he will be compelled, that is all ; let him alone ; I predict that Anshel Gloser will, of his own accord, come here, to my house, to bargain with me about his property. There is still a to-morrow.”

IV.—TO-MORROW.

"There is still a to-morrow!" How many weary souls, such as our Anshel, have striven in the bitterness of their spirits to forget, to annihilate that word? To-morrow!—It bears in its train naught but the promise of new-born anguish and misery; the story of the past revived, renewed; the rising of a sun obscured by clouds and gloom. Perhaps the people of the ghetto had so concluded, for, from the very moment when Anshel was declared a bankrupt man, he rose in the public's estimation. An inward voice seemed to repeat to them that there was a being stricken with the plague of misfortune, and that to continue to molest him was to commit a crime and mortal sin.

They sought then to assist and counsel him; but their assistance came too late, and their counsel was too harsh and cruel to endure; they advised him to sell his house. Purchasers were not found wanting; but Anshel revolted against this last proposition; he became furious when they suggested it.

"I am well aware," he cried out, "that it is Schlome Katz who sends you on this mission; but whoever dares to offer me such advice I consider my bitterest enemy. Yes, sooner would I become *schulklopper*,* aye, sooner read the *Thillim*,† than suffer my house to pass into his villainous clutches."

Thereupon, he attached an inestimable value to that house; in his eyes, there was not money sufficient in the world to purchase it. He clung to it like some poor shipwrecked sailor to his storm-tossed vessel. On her side, Esther complained but little, although she suffered and wept in silence.

"If he had not married me," thought she, "he would have made a good match; yes, 'tis I alone, who am the cause of all his unhappiness and misfortune."

The period estimated by Schlome, when the house should finally come into his possession, had nearly elapsed; misery hastens forward with redoubled pace.

* Sexton.

† Psalms.

One day, during his lonesome tramps, Ansel recollects that it was the very anniversary of the occasion when he had conducted his Esther to her nuptials. His heart mellowed in a tender joy ; he saw himself again beneath the windows of the room, wherein, for the first time, he had beheld her ; he heard anew the sacred evening prayer, repeated to her brother : " On my right stands the angel Michael ; on my left, Gabriel ; before me, Raphael stands ; behind me, Uriel ; but above me hovers the majesty of God."

Wrapped up in these sweet and consolatory fancies, he experienced anew what, poor fellow, he had not enjoyed for many a long and sorrowful day—a few moments of happiness unalloyed. In this frame of mind, he hastened onward until he met a peasant girl, bearing a goose to the market ; a bargain was quickly struck, and he received the goose in exchange for a piece of cloth. This purchase he intended should serve for the ensuing Sabbath's feast. It cannot be denied that the cloth which he gave was thrice the value of the bird ; still, Ansel believed he had effected a very good bargain, and went on his way exceedingly contented in mind. He traveled nearly three miles, carrying this feathered burden under his arm ; and so satisfied and overjoyed was his whole expression that, to have seen him, one would have thought he carried along with him an inestimable treasure. He stopped for a few hours at an inn situated at the entrance to the town ; for it was still broad daylight, and he hesitated crossing the ghetto with the living purchase under his arm. He waited until it was night.

"Look, mother, see what papa has brought home," cried little Schimmele, as Ansel entered his house with his burden, which he held prudently concealed beneath his overcoat. In his anxiety to display his bargain the bird dropped to the ground.

"A goose! a goose!" shouted the all-joyous Schimmele, clapping his hands in delight. Esther looked on and smiled, and with the smile—a thing of rare occurrence with her of late—brought back to Ansel's mind some old and well nigh forgotten recollections.

"You shall see, Esther," said he, "that this goose brings us good luck. It is ten years to day since we

were led beneath the *choupe*. Let us make a merry Sabbath with this goose ; it will do us, I am sure, no harm to enjoy ourselves again with a few hours of happiness."

He pronounced these words sadly, yet hopefully, too.

"Yes, dear wife, I have faith that all will be well yet ; heaven cannot, surely, wish that I should be utterly forlorn and lost. I have faith."

He spoke now with so great a confidence in the future, that one would have imagined he held in his hand, already written and sealed, the promise that his lot was, henceforth, to change, and for the better.

Although it was only Wednesday, Anshel remained at home, forgetting, for the time, all thoughts of business. He wished, so to speak, to sanctify himself for that day of feasting, as, formerly, did his ancestors at the foot of Sinai.

Saturday arrived, Anshel was seated at the table, surrounded by the many pleasant faces of his little children, and felt as happy as the veriest child among them. Esther's features shone with a transparent flush, like a bright halo, behind which glittered an expression of intense and complete joy. It was plainly apparent that she trusted and had hope in her husband.

After they had washed their hands, and Anshel had blessed the Sabbath white-bread, the meal commenced in earnest, much to the evident satisfaction of the children, who waited in anxiety the advent of the treasured goose.

"To day, children," said Anshel, "you may eat and drink as much as you like ; for, on this day, ten years ago, your mother and I, after our *chasene*,* were led for the first time to *schule*."

The children laughed, clapped their hands, and gave evidence of their approbation, which overcame, for a time, their uneasiness at the non-appearance of the fowl. Anshel, intoxicated with delight, gazed round upon their smiling countenances, and thought within himself : "Does Schlome Katz, Katz as he is, does he enjoy the pleasures of such a Sabbath ? No, no ; for this he must have children, and God has not blessed him with such treasures."

* Marriage.

The impatient murmurs of the youngsters recalled him to his senses, and the long and anxiously expected goose was brought in amidst a breathless silence. It was a magnificent example of judicious roasting, and looked tempting enough to move an epicure. Ansel himself determined to carve on this occasion, and, with this intention, he deliberately rolled up his sleeves, seized the carving knife, plunged the fork, after a moment's hesitation, into the breast, then, with an air of mingled trepidation and solemnity, commenced his work. To convey, however, any adequate idea of the expression of his features at this moment were beyond the powers of mortal being.

The goose was, at length, completely carved, and still rested in delicious morsels on the plate before him, when, suddenly, little Schimmele cried out: "Look, look, there is a nail driven in the goose!"

"Where? where?" demanded, at the same time, both Ansel and Esther. The child pointed to the place, and there, indeed, the nail was revealed.

The knife dropped quickly from our Ansel's hand, who stood transfixed, his face paler than the cloth before him on the table. Esther at once removed the bird, and ordered Schimmele to hasten to the rabbi's house, and enquire of him if it were *trefe** or not. The boy seized the dish, covered it with a napkin, and staggered away under his tempting load as fast as legs could bear him.

Meanwhile, gloomy and melancholy silence reigned throughout the house. The children gazed on with an expression of disappointment and dismay. Ansel lowered his eyes, whilst Esther sat immovably in her seat without uttering a word.

A few minutes afterwards, Schimmele returned, but his countenance foreboded no good; tears were in his eyes.

"Well?" demanded Esther, as he stood irresolutely on the threshold.

"The goose—the goose is *trefe*," replied the boy, after a desperate effort, and sobbing.

Esther, calmly, in a low tone, her head resting gently

* Unclean.

on her hand, said : "Anschel, you are truly a great Schlemiel !"

Thus had she in her turn, pronounced the fated word ! And all his future, as all his past, was now condemned ! What wound could, thenceforth, make bleed his heart after this blow, which she had leveled at it ; she who alone, of all the world, should have guarded and redeemed him ?

"I shall not survive this," he said to himself, with an air of sad and mournful resignation ; then he arose, put on his overcoat, and left without a word of adieu. He did not return until late at night. Esther had awaited him, a prey to uneasiness and alarm. As soon as he entered, she threw herself upon his breast, and wept bitter tears of sorrow.

"Nay," said he, releasing himself gently from her caresses, "it is not your fault ; but you can never repair the injury you have done. God knows how I have toiled and struggled ; still, I see it, I am a Schlemiel ; I have just come from Schlome Katz ; I have sold the house !"

Schlome Katz had established himself for some time in his ancestor's, or, rather, in our Anschel's house. He had repainted and refitted it, and, under his supervision, it assumed an altogether new and comelier appearance. Almost the livelong day did he gaze from the windows, enveloped in his rich and comfortable morning gown, and smoked his silver-mounted pipe, even as, years before, he had so confidently predicted.

There was one day in the year, when Schlome appeared a different man—it was *Yom Kippur*.^{*} On that occasion, he never quitted the synagogue, he prayed and mortified himself, and, when the *chasan* came to this passage : "What deeds preserve the dead from the torments of the hereafter ?" and the congregation responded, "Prayer, justice and repentance ;" then was he seen to beat, with violence, his breast, as a sign of penitence and sorrow.

As he had no children of his own, he adopted the orphans of Anschel and Esther his widow.

* Day of Atonement.

The very day, in fact, when he had effected the sale of the house, Anshel departed, none knew whither, and never returned.

Many weeks subsequently, some peasants in the neighborhood brought back his dead body, which they had discovered in a field where the river had cast it up. It was reported that he had *met with some accident*.

Thereupon was he buried. Now it happened that one of the grave diggers slipped on the moist and freshly upturned sod of the grave ; and, at the same time, the dead body, which he was holding by the feet, escaped from his grasp and rolled headlong into the ditch. Schlome Katz, who stood near by, observing the accident, looked into the grave, and said :

“ He is dead, poor fellow, and may he forgive me ; but I cannot help saying it : he is, to the very end, a Schlemiel ! ”

And this was the last stone thrown at the unhappy wretch.

THE SABBATH EVE.

THE SABBATH EVE.

A TRUE STORY OF BERLIN.



I.

In the year 1750, when he was fifteen years old, Joseph Lehman left his father's house.

He had been an unusually bright boy, obedient to his teachers and parents, of handsome and cheerful appearance, a promising student. In the Hebrew he had made marked advance for so young a "seeker after knowledge," so that his friends all anticipated for him a brilliant future.

Herr Moses Lehman was a well-to-do merchant of Berlin, of good repute among the citizens. His wife, Frau Bertha, was widely admired for her beauty of mind and person. She had married Lehman when she was only fourteen years of age, and at the time the events here recorded occurred, although the mother of ten children, she yet looked remarkably young and attractive. Joseph, being her eldest, was, as usual, the favorite child. It is no wonder that she had so strong a love for him, for he was in every feature her "own son."

On the night of September 14th, young Joseph Lehman left his father's house, to the astonishment of all who knew him. Herr Lehman and his comely wife were spending the evening at the house of a friend, some distance from their home. Theresa and Isaac were at the theatre in company with their uncle; the other children were abed. Joseph was asked to go with

his parents on their visit, but he told them he preferred remaining home, so as to devote a few extra hours to the mastering of some difficult passages in the *Gemara*, in time for the morning recitation ; for he was a student of Rabbi Menasseh, the noted preacher of the city.

The Lehmans returned home at about eleven o'clock, and retired. In the morning the family assembled in the parlor for prayer, as was the custom in most private families of Germany. It was noticed that Joseph was absent, and this was remarkable, for he was ever the first to arise, and was regular and devout at prayers. His brother Isaac ran to his room ; his bed had been untouched, and the coverings lay as smooth and unruffled as if they were just put in order by the servant. He hurried down to tell this circumstance to his father. Frau Lehman, suspecting that something was amiss, went herself to Joseph's room, and perceived a letter lying on his little table, addressed, in a firm hand, "*To my ever dear mother, FRAU BERTHA LEHMAN.*"

She hastily opened the note, but had scarcely read the first few words before her shrieks summoned the household to the room, where they found her lying on the floor, unconscious, her fingers holding the folded letter.—These were its contents :—

"I have left my home never to return until it is God's will that I shall introduce to you and my family the Light which I have this day been permitted to see. Tell my father that, however much I thank him for his oft-repeated instructions to me, all his attempts to make me a believer in the doctrines of his faith are in vain. I can no longer think or act as a Jew ; and I pray to God that the happiness which I now feel as a faithful Son of the Church will be soon participated in by all those beings I love on earth.

"May God bless you, my dear mother. I shall never forget your sweet face. Your portrait is the only article, except my clothing and the little money that I have saved, that I take away with me.

"I go far away from Berlin. I go in company with a good man, who will see that I am provided with everything needful for my happiness. It is useless for you to seek me. Fare you well!

"Your Son,

JOSEPH."

Astonished, grieved and terrified were the inmates of Lehman's house that eventful day. Never before had such a misfortune happened to any Jewish family in

Berlin. So intelligent and promising a youth as Joseph, so mild and obedient, thus to break his connection with his family without any apparent cause, or suspicion of a cause, was a circumstance that could not long remain a secret. In a few hours, the fact was known throughout the whole Jewish quarter. Herr Lehman alone bore the sad event composedly, and sought to allay the violent grief in which his wife and daughter Theresa indulged. Fruitless inquiries were made of the neighbors as to whether they had seen Joseph leave the house. Herr Lehman suspected that, ere nightfall, the wanderer would return, as he could not realize that his son could thus sever the tie which had bound them so pleasantly together.

Night came, but no Joseph.

Then the old spirit of the patriarchs came upon him. He summoned his family to the parlor, called in a few of the neighbors, including Rabbi Menasseh, and in a low but firm voice he said to those around him :

“My friends, my eldest son, my first-born, Joseph, has abandoned the faith of his fathers. I and my family will now mourn him as dead. We will keep *Shiva*.* And from this moment I do not wish his name to be mentioned in my presence nor before any of my household.”

Silently and sadly the Lehmans sat on the humble seats that were provided by the congregation for mourners, the Rabbi rent their garments, the customary prayers were recited, friends briefly offered the usual words of condolence, and Joseph Lehman was of the dead.

II.

It was Sabbath on the night of September 14th, 1765. The moon was shining brightly ; the air was clear and mild. The service at the synagogues was concluded, and the pious worshippers were hurrying hungry to their homes and the genial Sabbath meal.

In the house of the Lehmans there was unusual excitement. Rebecca, the youngest child, was on this night

* The seven days of mourning.

to present to the family her betrothed, young Emil Stern. Three of her sisters and two brothers were already married. Isaac was quite a patriarch himself, having not only his own five young ones, but his mother and her unmarried children, to care for; his father, Moses Lehman, having died twelve years before;—some say of a broken heart, although he preserved his outward calmness to the last; but it is probable that the apostacy of his son was instrumental in the causing of his early death, for he was a man of strict probity and great family pride, and his sensitive feelings had been terribly wounded by that severe blow.

Grand preparations were made that night to celebrate the auspicious event that was to introduce the Lehmans to a new member of the family, as well as to welcome the regular weekly guest, or rather “bride,” as the good people of Berlin called the Sabbath. The spacious dining-room of Isaac Lehman’s house seem furnished as for a banquet, for chairs and dishes were placed for nearly thirty people, the married couples, old Mrs. Lehman, the venerable Rabbi Menasseh, the family doctor, such of the grandchildren as were allowed to be present, and a few intimate friends besides. Old Mrs. Lehman had just ensconced herself in the great arm-chair which had been in use for almost a century. Mrs. Isaac was busy in the kitchen giving final orders and superintending the bits of ornament which were being placed on the several savory dishes—the young Misses Lehman being engaged in carrying them, when decorated, to the huge table in the dining-room; the married daughters and daughters-in-law conversing in low tones as to the subject of Rebecca’s engagement and her “future prospects”; while Rebecca herself was in a maze of excitement, now opening the window to see if the people were returning from *Schule*, then looking at the clock and wondering whether it was not time for her betrothed to arrive, for his business that day was such as to prevent his attending Synagogue.

At last the table was laid, and the ladies had nothing else to be busy about, except probably to consult the quaint mirror occasionally, and endeavor to discern something amiss with their personal appearance, when the

welcome sound of hurrying footsteps was heard, and the door was scarcely opened when the happy and hungry men and boys rushed in, eager to receive the Sabbath kiss and exchange mutual congratulations. In a few moments young Stern arrived, and the circle was complete. Mr. Lehman introduced his future brother-in-law to all assembled. Emil was previously known to Isaac alone, having lived in Frankfort, where a month ago he had met and loved Rebecca, who was spending a short visit there with a school friend. Mr. Stern was cordially welcomed by all, both because Rebecca was the favorite child, and also by reason of his prepossessing appearance, and the reputation which had preceded him. Then Rabbi Menasseh having recited the usual Sabbath blessing, the company, in the best of humor, proceeded to enjoy the sumptuous fare which their generous host had provided.

Amid the general hilarity that prevailed, the animated conversation and hearty laughter, no one observed the unusual dejection which preyed upon old Mrs. Lehman. The conduct of her eldest son, and the untimely death of her beloved husband, had combined to deprive her of the vivacious spirits which had formerly characterized her as the happy wife and mother. She was frequently addicted to nervousness and low spirits, but time had gradually reconciled her to her bereavement, and after a few years she never betrayed to those around her, that, despite the benign and cheerful look which her face always presented, her loving heart often felt for the one who was absent and perhaps forgotten by all but herself, and her mind never ceased to remember the pretty boy who was so fond of her, and who had promised in that last cruel letter of his never to forget her who was still his mother. So, on this joyous night, when more than at other times she should have been happy and contented, she felt strangely indifferent to the merriment and happiness around that Sabbath table. To her never-forgotten mind, one loved face was absent—her first-born, who should have sat in the seat of honor which Isaac now occupied—and as she reflected on the sad past, so she inwardly prayed that the wanderer might soon return and be an honored member of the community, as was his father before him.

But hark! What noise is that in the street? Who, on this peaceful Sabbath, can be so forgetful of the rest that all good Israelites should enjoy every Friday night? The noise becomes louder, curses strong and deep appall the startled ears of the listeners.

"Never mind, good folks," said Isaac Lehman, "probably the noise comes from some drunken brawlers. Don't mind them, the police will soon——"

His words came to a sudden stop, when the sound of a heavy fall, directly in front of their door, aroused their feelings of humanity, and the men rushed outside in time to hear the words, "Die then, you beggar, if you wish it," and a tall man dressed as a priest ran at full speed up the street. Isaac and the others lifted his unfortunate companion and carried him indoors, laying him on a servant's bed adjoining the kitchen.

This untoward occurrence cast a gloom over the spirits of the little assemblage, and they now spoke in subdued tones, waiting with some anxiety to hear a report from the doctor, who at once proceeded to the room where the man lay, to discover the extent of his injuries, and to use such remedies and restoratives as his knowledge of his art afforded.

Soon he appeared at the door of the dining-room, and his pallid face and nervous manner betokened that his patient was dangerously wounded, if not already past all medical aid.

"Mr. Lehman," he asked, "will you come in the hall for a moment?"

Isaac quickly answered the summons.

"What is it? Is the man dead? Who is he?"

The doctor made no answer to the three questions, but gravely begged Lehman to dismiss the company, as it would be necessary for the well-being of the sufferer, who he was pained to say was a Jew, that the house should be kept perfectly quiet.

Mr. Lehman then returned to the room, and briefly informed his relatives and friends of what the doctor had told him; on hearing which, the guests silently rose and prepared to depart. They all felt sorry for the poor man who had met with such severe treatment, and had so rudely disturbed their comfortable meal, although

they *did* feel rather shocked when it was told them that the sufferer was an Israelite ; but their sorrow was in truth the more heartfelt for poor Rebecca, who was sobbing piteously, crying that it was a "cruel shame that it should have happened just on the first night that dear Emil was home with us." Emil, too, looked rather woe-begone, but he was restored to good humor when the time for departure arrived, and to him of course was assigned the agreeable task of taking Rebecca home. She lived only a few yards' distance from Isaac's house, but this made no difference to Emil, for he purposely walked home in the wrong direction, and failed to see his error—as did pretty Rebecca also—until he had gone over a mile, when he gallantly said, "So much the better, my dear. There is, then, a mile more for us to walk back."

So, lovers-like, they slowly retraced their steps, stopping every now and then to gaze at the glories of the moon, which seemed to smile at their devotion, until they arrived again at Isaac Lehman's abode. Rebecca was surprised to see that the dining-room was still alight, and the shadows of figures, sitting near the window curtains, betokening that the family had not yet retired for the night.

"Let us go in, Emil, dear," said she, "probably we can hear more about the poor man whose unfortunate accident spoiled our evening's enjoyment."

Emil knocked at the door.

Isaac Lehman answered the knock himself. His face was ghastly pale.

"Why, Isaac, what is it? Are you sick?" anxiously asked Rebecca.

"Alas, Rebecca dear, little did you know what you were saying an hour ago, when you declared what a shame it was that our enjoyment should be so interrupted. Rebecca, I grieve to tell you that the man who is dying in this house, dying from the blows of an assassin, is our long lost brother—*Joseph!*"

"O, no, Isaac, tell me that you are mistaken. It can not be that our poor brother should perish thus, and on this of all nights," cried Rebecca. She was a baby when the trouble had occurred, but ignorant as she was con-

cerning her misguided brother, she could never think of him without pity and regret.

They entered the dining-room which they had so recently left, but with such different feelings. Rebecca sobbed convulsively; the Lehman's sat around quietly waiting for intelligence from the adjoining room. Old Mrs. Lehman was by the bedside of her son, cooling his feverish brow, soothing his pain, and talking to him with those words of endearment which only a mother can utter. Isaac stood by her side, anxiously watching the broken breathing of the sufferer, and at every apparent change gliding softly into the room where the grieving relatives were seated, and answering their numerous inquiries as best he could.

Isaac had recognized his brother as soon as he beheld him. He was deeply shocked, but his grief was the more lest his widowed mother should become aware of the sad fact. Could she survive the blow? He expressed his fears to the doctor, but that worthy man, who had attended Mrs. Lehman since her marriage, felt convinced, from his knowledge of her character, that no ill effects would result from her being acquainted with the sad truth. Besides, the sufferer, in the midst of his paroxysms of pain—for the wound was mortal, and he had but few hours to live—was continually moaning "Mother!" "Come to me, mother," so that at last Isaac willingly consented that she should be told the truth. When Mrs. Lehman heard who was lying in the next room, she at first felt inclined to faint, but, by a strong effort, she composed herself, calmly said, "God has heard my prayers. He has allowed me to see my first-born before I die," and in a moment she was with her son, kissing his thin lips, and gazing tenderly on his never-forgotten, although greatly changed, features. She ceased to think of his early abandonment of her and his home, of his apostacy, of his reckless life—for reckless it must have been to have come to so wretched an end—but thought of him only as he was in the days of his boyish innocence, when he was the pride of the community.

Joseph lay in a state of unconsciousness for about an hour, when his senses returned, and he beheld strange faces about him. He gazed at them for some time, won-

dering, amid all his pain, where and among whom he was lying. At last, Mrs. Lehman, prompted by the physician who saw that reason had returned to the sufferer, and that but a little time was left him wherein to recognize, and be consoled by, his relatives—said, in a low voice :

“Do you know me, Joseph, my son? Do you not remember your mother, my dear boy? Speak to us, Joseph, and tell us where you have been since last we saw you.”

Joseph knew the voice at once. With a loud cry, he lifted himself from the bed, threw his weak arms around his mother’s neck, and begged her to kiss and bless him before he died.

“O, mother, I have not long to live, but something tells me that I shall live long enough to tell you all I have suffered since I became the great sinner I am. But, mother, tell me, I implore you, that you forgive me for the wrong I have done, and then I am ready to die.”

“Forgive you, my child! I have never forgotten you since the cruel night you left us. Forgive you? Alas, my boy, I would I could give you a life to live again, and be to me the good son you always were. See, Joseph, here is your old playmate and brother, Isaac, and there are Theresa and Moses, and here, my dear boy, is your little sister Rebecca, who, to-night, celebrates her betrothal.”

The brothers and sisters in turn pressed Joseph’s hand, and spoke to him words of comfort.

Joseph had sinned, and greatly, but now that he was about to leave this world, and stand in the presence of the great Judge, it was for them to make his last hours as cheering and happy as possible.

Death levels all earthly feelings. In the presence of the great Destroyer, pride, anger, hatred, revenge, stand abashed, and Love alone should remain to solace the helpless victim.

“Mother, dear mother,” said the dying man in broken accents, “before I die, let me tell you how bitterly I acknowledge my great error. That man who struck me this blow which is hastening my death, was my early tempter. Years ago, when I was a young student at the Rabbi’s, he would waylay me on my path to the school,

and, in honeyed words, attempt to seduce me from my religion. Flattered by his praises, I yielded to his wishes, and became a Christian! That night I left my home, I met him just outside of the *Judengasse*, and begged him to go with me to the priest who had baptised me, to ask him whether I could not renounce my newly-made vows—but he refused me, said I was now a Christian, and could never return to my old faith. I stayed at his house some days, fearing to walk out lest I should meet some one who knew me. One night, Strasser—my tempter—told me that he had been in the *Judengasse*, and had heard that my father was keeping *Shiva* for me, that I was dead to all my house, and I could never return.—

“Oh, mother, that was a hard blow for me. I had hopes of going to my home on some night, of seeing you alone, and of asking you to intercede for me with father;—but this intelligence made me resign all idea of returning to you. Then Strasser made me think ill of you all, for forgetting me so soon and giving me up as one dead, instead of searching the city everywhere to find and reclaim me.—

“Then, mother, I went to Vienna, entered a church as a choir-singer, would have risen in the estimation of the priests, but the other singers taunted me about my Jewish countenance, and I, afraid lest they might discover who I was, left the church, and wandered about the city for months in search of employment. Jews I would not apply to, for I could not mingle with them for fear of being detected. Christians would not trust me, so they said, for I looked like a Jew.

“O, mother, I cannot tell you the life I then led, with whom I associated, what I was forced to do, what, alas! I did of my own accord. For ten years I lived a life of wrong, of crime, a life of constant fear, never illumined by a ray of joy, my hopes blasted, my youth wrecked, my future cursed.

“Never may any of you realize the wretchedness which overwhelmed me when I learned of the death of my father. None but the son, who is a wanderer, an outcast, can properly picture the utter desolation which I felt when I heard that all my expectations of paternal pardon and blessing were in vain. My father—he whom

I had always revered—worshipped—died with no words of forgiveness or remembrance for his sinful son.

“Three years ago, I again met Strasser, who knew me at once, and employed all his wily eloquence to make me his tool. Driven by want and despair, I consented to act as agent in Pesth for a despicable society with which he was connected, whose object was to kidnap Jewish children and turn them into holy adherents of the church! I tried to do as my associates did, lure little boys and girls from their homes and set them against their parents and their God. But, mother, I could not; villain as I was, but not so bad as that. I could not destroy the peace of others as mine had been destroyed. Again I fled, and happily fell in with a benevolent man who took pity on my forlorn condition and made me the tutor of his children. He was a kind-hearted Christian. His sons profited by my instruction, and I took every opportunity to instill into their young minds, a love for all mankind, a pity and respect for the Jews, feelings to which the young of our day are strangers.

“Inspired by the peaceful surroundings of that good family, my thoughts gradually returned to their old channels, and I began to feel again as a Jew.

“O, mother, earnestly and tearfully I prayed every night to God to give me hope for future pardon, and to strengthen me in my endeavors to do what was right.—

“My strength is fast failing me, I cannot linger much longer. This night, being in Berlin, a strange curiosity impelled me to approach the old house and see whether you all lived there. I saw you sitting by your Sabbath table, looking happy and merry, while I, your first-born son, was an outcast and an apostate. Suddenly a man approached me, touched my shoulder, and, in a sneering voice, asked me if I would like to be one of the merry party. I knew the man—it was *Strasser*! In a moment the history of my past life passed before me. I thought of nothing save this one cruel fact, that I was a vagabond, and this man was the cause of my suffering. I struck him, grappled with him—he plunged his dagger into my side—and I knew no more until I found myself in this welcome room, with you, my dear, dear mother, by my side.”

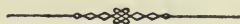
Joseph's voice grew weaker and weaker, until it was almost inaudible.

"Mother, will you forgive me—Mother—kiss me once more. Say the *Shemang* for me!—Mother!"——

And Joseph Lehman was no more among the living.

A TALE OF THE INQUISITION.

A TALE OF THE INQUISITION.



It was a cold night in the month of December, 1660. The wind blew with force ; and in the intervals of its most violent blasts, the hail came through the thick fog which covered the city of Amsterdam, that rich capital of Holland, lying on the borders of the Zuyder Zee ; that industrious city, so proud of its bold dams, of its edifices built on the water, and of its navies of vessels which come to the very doors of its warehouses to pour in the riches of the two worlds, and leave it as soon as winter comes and when the fogs reign. For then this Batavian metropolis presents a very sad spectacle ; everywhere water, everywhere canals overflow ; large mud puddles, and the admirable dikes built by the Dutch, seem each moment to yield to the efforts of the waters which threaten to submerge that fertile region.

It was nine o'clock, and the city seemed deserted (for the storm obliged the citizens to remain in their homes), when two men might have been seen advancing towards a small public house, having for its sign Absalom hung up to a tree by the hair, and which was situated near the place which is now called Juden-Herren-Gracht.

They proceeded with caution, wrapped up in large cloaks, and, after many efforts to resist the fury of the wind, and not to fall in the canal bordered with trees, which they were coasting, they entered the inn in good

health and spirits. A smell of rancid oil, juniper and burnt wine welcomed them upon their entrance ; and when they had divested themselves of their dripping cloaks and had approached to the fire to dry themselves, the drinkers arose, recognizing in one of the new comers their friend Van Klief, proprietor of the inn of Absalom.

It was in fact the host Van Klief, who had just procured a physician for his wife Bobby, suddenly taken with a violent nervous attack. Not being able to find their family physician, the honest inn-keeper had decided to procure a Spanish physician, lately arrived in Holland, and who gave his name as Don Balthazar Orobio. As soon as the host and the doctor had entered the sick chamber, the guests recommenced their playing and conversation.

The inn of Van Klief was not much patronized except by Israelites, who, through the spirit of nationality, came by preference to a co-religionist ; and Holland, which has always distinguished itself for the liberty of conscience, which she has accorded to the followers of the laws of Moses, contained already several Israelitish communities, who were noted for their wealth and good conduct. The Israelitish congregation of Amsterdam, especially, had flourished since a few centuries ; and, as if they had undertaken to answer to the reproach of idleness so unjustly attributed to the Israelites, had for a long time employed their children in rude works at the docks, in the exercise of the most difficult trades and in selling at retail, in the open air, in wheelbarrows. It was to this class of society, then, that the numerous guests assembled on that night in the Inn of Absalom belonged, and the discussion was on the sacrifices they had made for religion.

"I," said a big merchant of fruit, having a double chin, an inflamed face and a large bald head, "I remember having had, one Friday, fruit in my wheelbarrow which was beginning to spoil. I was going to sell it, when the clock struck six and announced that the Sabbath prayers were beginning. I hurried to my house and put away my merchandise, which on Sunday morning had become unsaleable."

"I," said another, "was employed in a brewery, and

at the coming of the Feast of Passover, did not wish to continue working a substance which contained leaven, so I preferred being dismissed."

"I," spoke a third, "was travelling, and not being able to procure food prepared according to the rites of our religion, I fed myself on bread, water and eggs during a fortnight," and, added he, with a deep sigh, "I did not have the pleasure of eating cheese during all that time."

"What is all that!" observed a tall, lean, yellow-faced, long and bony armed, negro-haired individual, "hear what I did one *Yom Kippur* evening. I was coming from the synagogue, when I heard a man, getting in his chaise, say to his two porters: 'Do not cross the street of the Jews; those dogs have a feast, and I wish to have nothing in common with them to-night.' I said to myself: 'Stop a moment, old carcass of herring; wait a bit. I will pay you for your words.' Thereupon I very slyly followed the steps of my man; and on arriving at the borders of a muddy rivulet, I seized the chaise and flung it in the mud, together with the two porters."

A loud burst of laughter welcomed this good trick, and the hero proudly brandished his nervous arms, and walked the smoky room with a triumphant air, when, to the astonishment of all present, a clear firm voice cried out loudly: "And you have done very wrong." At those words a great din was raised in the assembly.

"Who says that?" rose from all parts of the room.

"I," quietly answered a man, who being occupied in warming himself for a few moments, had escaped the notice of the guests; and as he rose to repeat the observation, he was recognized as Don Balthazar Orobio, the physician that Van Klief had brought with him. He was a tall man, of noble carriage and distinguished air; his hair was of a beautiful black; his small moustaches were shaped in points; the color of his complexion, and especially his accent, indicated, if his name had not already done so, that he was a Spaniard.

When he saw that he was heard, and that his audience gave proofs of discontent, which might have been manifested otherwise than by words, he added with energy:

"Violence against a man who does not profess our religious belief, ought not to be tolerated by him who is tru-

ly pious. If such were not the case, it would be in fact establishing the power of the strong over the weak, and the omnipotence of the majority against the minority. It would be lowering faith—that Divine torch—to the condition of ignoble merchandise, which is bought and sold. It would be transforming religion—that language of conscience—into a contagious disease, which obliges those who are attacked by it, to conceal it, for fear of being pursued, sequestered, and even assassinated judicially.”

Don Balthazar, seeing that his auditors were moved with the solemnity of his words, quietly sat down near the fire to dry himself thoroughly ; and they were about to request of him an explanation, when Van Klief entered, bringing a large tumbler of smoking hot wine, on the surface of which floated a citron peel.

“Drink this,” said he, to the Doctor ; “it will warm you ; and since you are pleased to wait until my poor wife awakes, relate something to us, you who have come from so far. This recital will help us to pass our time, and will give an opportunity to make the medicine you have ordered for my Boby.”

“I consent,” replied the physician, with mildness. “That which I will relate will serve as an explication of what I have been telling these gentlemen ; and will prove to them, perhaps, that the sacrifice I have made to my belief was more difficult than to throw a man into the water.”

The guests, on hearing this peroration, immediately left their tables and formed a circle around the stove, in which was put an additional quantity of combustibles.

All the animated figures that placed themselves on the dark side of the blackened inn, lighted only by the reflection of a smoky lamp, recalled a tableau of Teniers, illuminated *a la* Rembrandt. At the same time, the storm which raged without, adding, by its irregular blasts, to what was awful in the words of Orobio, accompanied by a rain which splashed against the octangular windows, cased in lead, seemed like a terrible confirmation of his words. He commenced as follows :—

“The scenes which I am about to relate to you are very sad : great misfortunes have crossed my path, and yet I am but thirty years old.”

"Thirty years?" exclaimed the assembly, with painful astonishment; for Orobio seemed at least fifty. Grief, no doubt, had drawn those deep lines which furrowed his face, otherwise so noble and distinguished. He proceeded:—

"My father, Don Cæsar Orobio, a wealthy citizen of Madrid, possessed an immense fortune—the handsomest palaces, the richest meadows, gold in immense quantities, sumptuous furniture, and servants in great numbers. These are objects which surrounded me from my infancy.

"These riches had not been acquired by my father, but descended to him by paternal inheritance. To preserve them, very heavy sacrifices had been imposed upon his ancestors. You have, without doubt, heard of that iniquitous tribunal known as the Inquisition, which, under the pretext of protecting the Catholic faith, has sullied it with an eternal blot of blood? From the first years of its existence in Spain, the Inquisition has persecuted the Israelites; and, finally, on the 31st of March, 1492, it forced them to quit the Peninsula.

"To know how difficult it is to separate ourselves from Spanish life, one must have lived under that beautiful sky; one must have trod upon the soil of so rich a vegetation. Exile became impossible to my ancestors. They preferred abjuration, and were among those hundred thousand Israelitish families—forming nearly one million of individuals—who changed the religion of Moses for Christianity; but, as it was necessity, and not conviction, which had led them to apostacy, they remained Israelites at heart, and Christians but in appearance.

"Then the Inquisition, seeing that its mandates were disregarded, took the most severe measures against those who followed the customs of the Jews. Its atrocious punishments will appear to the eyes of future generations as merely the effects of a disordered imagination, so difficult will it be to believe these cold-hearted cruelties.

"My great-grandfather, although appearing in the churches, and acting the character of a pious Catholic, had his son secretly circumcised; and he did the same to my father. But Don Cæsar, in whom the Israelitish zeal had faded, baptized me, and endeavored to train me in the Catholic faith. He did not do this as an act of

conscience, for he himself was not a believer ; but when he saw that the vengeance of the Inquisition became daily more terrible, he resolved to break off entirely his connection with Judaism, and to make of his children good and sincere Catholics.

“Unfortunately for these projects, my mother had yet a spark of Jewish feeling in her bosom. By her discourses and her writings she accustomed us—my two brothers, my sister, and myself—from our infancy, to trust only in the Israelitish faith for the salvation of our souls. This often occasioned discussions in our household, which were, however, quickly ended, because Don Cæsar adored his wife.

“We were growing up, and our education was advancing. Destined for the medical profession, I made rapid progress in that science. My sister was very beautiful, and was to be married to a noble hidalgo, when, in less than a week, a fatal disease carried her off, together with my mother and two brothers. My affliction was without limit ; but it is impossible to describe the despair of my father. Sorrow placed even him at the brink of death ; and he revived but slowly to life, and the consciousness of the awful loss he had sustained.

“Since that day his character became morose. Anything irritated him. His eyes were bloodshot ; and I soon perceived that painful sensations continually oppressed his heart. I was not long in learning this terrible secret. My father, tortured with remorse, attributed the misfortunes which had befallen him, to the coldness he bore for the Israelitish faith. The voice of conscience told him that the time of disguise was past ; that he was an Israelite at heart, and that he should not fear to show himself one.

“In vain I remonstrated with him on the danger of so foolish a project. He would understand nothing. ‘I am guilty towards God,’ he would reply to me ; ‘and I owe Him atonement.’ And when I proposed to fly from Spain, he told me that he ought to die there where was the grave of his wife. His conduct was no longer a mystery. One night we were both arrested and conducted to the cells of the HOLY OFFICE.

“How can I relate to you all the terrors this tribunal

had in its proceedings! After a first interrogation, in which they made use of every thing in their power to persuade me to accuse my father, I was left alone, during fifteen months, in a dismal dungeon. No books were given me. I was in the most complete solitude; and it was so damp that the matting decayed from mere contact with the ground. I would have forgiven them, those infamous jailors, for forbidding me to complain—for gagging my mouth when I spoke out—for striking me when I cried aloud—for leaving me without a piece of furniture, without clothing—for causing me to sleep on the ground—for feeding me only on rotten bread—for torturing me amid an unhealthy atmosphere. But yet the most odious punishment they inflicted on me was that they did not speak to me of my father during those long fifteen months; that they did not answer me when I asked them if he yet lived, and contented themselves with laughing cruelly when I wished to know how soon my trial would come on.

“At length, one night, two jailors, with sinister countenances, came to lead me away, and conducted me through an innumerable number of windings. Having lost the habit of walking, I tottered. I was no longer accustomed to light, and my eyes could not bear the pale brightness of their torches; and, instead of supporting me, those two guides struck me with cruelty to make me hasten my pace. We reached an underground cave, where reigned the most profound silence, and on which was written this terrible inscription, ‘The Chamber of Torture.’

“In the centre were erected the dreadful instruments of torture, and on a sort of stage were seated three Inquisitors—their features hidden beneath a hood, just as if they were frightened to appear with uncovered faces before their victims. One of them asked me to accuse my father; I strenuously refused, but endeavored, on the contrary, to exculpate the author of my existence. He then made a sign, and two men advanced towards me. They were dressed in black robes, and likewise had their heads covered with a hood of the same color, with a place cut out for the eyes, nose and mouth. These men were the executioners. They seized me and stripped me of my ragged garments.

"Then the Inquisitor again urged me to confess the crime of my father ; and, as I refused, he ordered that the torture of the cord should be applied to me. My hands were bound behind my back, by means of a rope passed through a pulley, attached to the vault. The executioners thus elevated me in the air, and after having left me a few minutes in this position, let the rope go with violence, and I remained suspended in the air at about half a foot from the ground. This terrible toss dislocated all my joints, and the cord which squeezed my wrists entered through the flesh as far as the nerves. Here, gentlemen, is the mark."

The audience drew back with horror at this.

"At this period I was twenty-three years of age. I was vigorous, and my soul, especially, was well tried. I courageously bore that terrible pain, while I affirmed that my father was innocent.

"They then passed to the second torture, which was administered by means of water. I was laid on a kind of wooden horse, made in the form of a gutter, without any other bottom than a stick which traversed it, and on which the body, falling backward, was bent by the effect of the mechanism of the wooden horse, and assumed such a position that the feet were more elevated than the head. This position was extremely painful, and my limbs experienced the most distressing suffering, occasioned by the pressure of the rope which bound them. Then the Inquisitor introduced through my throat a wet piece of fine linen, a part of which covered my nostril. Water was poured in my mouth and nose so slowly, that it required an hour to swallow the smallest quantity. I could not respire. Each moment I made an effort to swallow, hoping to give passage to a little air ; but as the wet linen put an obstacle, the water entered at the same time, through the nostrils. You may conceive the sufferings which I had to bear.

"I was on the point of suffocating : I made a sign that I wished to speak. They then released me, and conducted me near the Inquisitors. Then I declared that I was an Israelite, that I merited death, and that I sought to be led to it, but that these sufferings were useless.

"'It is not you of whom it is questioned,' replied the

chief of the Inquisitors, in a sepulchral voice, 'but of your father.'

" 'My father is innocent,' I replied, with firmness.

" 'Well,' coldly replied the same familiar of the Inquisition, 'pass on to the torture of fire.'

" The executioners bound my legs and hands in such a manner that they could not change their position ; then they rubbed my feet with oil, and I was placed before a strong fire, where I remained until my flesh was cracked, and the bones and nerves appeared at all parts. At that moment I thought I would die, and I fell insensible. I learned since that the physician attached to the establishment had declared that I could not support any more. I was reconducted to my cell, and it was six months before I recovered from those atrocious tortures of that night. But my heart was tranquil.

" I had not accused my father.

" When I recovered, it was announced to me that I should appear at the next Auto-da-fe. This ridiculous word, which signifies act of faith, is the appellation given the execution of the decrees of the Inquisition. In fact, a few days after, I was wrapped in a cloak which is worn by condemned heretics, consisting of a shirt without sleeves, a large yellow cross on the breast and back, and a pasteboard bonnet, on which were painted devils and flames. Thus attired, I was obliged to follow a solemn procession.

" We started from a church where the service of the dead was celebrated. Thence, we proceeded to a large public park, on one side of which were erected stages for those invited, and on the other hand an amphitheatre for those condemned. Surrounded by soldiers, priests and penitents, of all grades, we arrived there, chained and gagged, with our feet bare. I imagined I was walking to death. I felt happy in the thought that the term of my sufferings was at an end ; but, after a sermon, which was delivered to us by a friar, our sentence was read, and I learned that I was condemned to pass my days in a convent, where I must pronounce the vows of seclusion and poverty. All the wealth of my family was confiscated for the benefit of the Inquisition. At a distance of about twenty paces from me, an aged man was

advancing with tottering steps. His cloak was drawn over his face, his trembling hand was swinging to and fro a taper of yellow wax, his white hair discovered a forehead marked with deep lines of sorrow. Those attenuated features appeared familiar to me. But judge of my horror when his sentence was read aloud, thus:—‘Thou, Cæsar Orobio, art condemned to die!’ *That* man was my father. In less than two years, he had become an old man, through suffering and grief.

“The barbarians would not allow us the pleasure of embracing each other for the last time. He was conducted and tied to the stake, and there he cried in a loud voice:—‘I merit death, because I have, against the voice of my conscience, forsaken the faith of my fathers. I am a Jew; and I die believing in the Jewish faith. May the Almighty pardon me! And thou, my son, do not forget that the religion of Moses is the only true one, and mayst thou return to it some day!’

“After these words, the smoke choked his utterance, and hid him from my view.

* * * * *

“Conducted into a convent, I remained there three months, crazy, and when I regained my strength and intelligence, I formed the resolution to exert my utmost endeavors to fly to a foreign land, where I would embrace the religion of Moses as the last will of my dying father. I had the appearance of submitting to my lot; I affected great zeal in the cause in which I was engaged, and, at the end of two years of constraint, I was charged to collect alms in the city for our convent. During several weeks I prepared for my escape, and, at last, one morning, I was fortunate enough to fly from Madrid in a secular habit. I took the road to Portugal, and after a long and fatiguing march, in which I was burnt by the sun, and devoured by thirst and dust, I arrived at Lisbon.

“The Inquisition was so powerful in this city that I had not the courage to stop long. I found some relations of my family, and they gave me enough money to embark for England. We were on the deck discoursing with the sailors and passengers, when the conversation turned on

religion. I declared that I was a Jew. I was now regarded with an evil eye, and was no more questioned.

"But the next day we were assailed by a violent tempest, and the mutinous sailors declared that there was a Jew on board, and that I was the cause of the tempest, which every moment threatened to submerge our vessel. The captain and some passengers greatly remonstrated. The squall became stronger, the foaming waves rose higher, and the thunder rolled with more violence. The sailors insisted anew, that, as there was a Jew on board, they had no hope of safety ; and, notwithstanding my prayers and my offers, they seized me, and cast me into the sea. Luckily, the captain threw me a hencoop, to which I clung with energy. After some hours of a terrible struggle and horrible agony, I commended my soul to the God of Israel, and I thought that my end had arrived.

"On my revival, I found myself lying in a good hammock. I was dry and warm, but weak. A fly boat had rescued me, and I recognized the finger of Providence when I learnt that the Portuguese ship, whose crew had treated me in so inhuman a manner, had perished, without one of all those who manned her being left to tell the tale.

"I landed, fortunately, in Holland, and it is a month since I came to Amsterdam, where I propose, first, to become an Israelite, and then to exercise the profession of physician. I have been happy enough to show you, by the recital of my misfortunes, that violence is a dangerous auxiliary for religion, and that we Israelites ought to interdict all species of religious tyranny, in thinking of the evils which fanaticism has caused to fall on us."

The good innkeeper now announced that his wife had taken the medicine prescribed by the doctor, and had recovered. Van Klief, pleased with his success, offered him pay, which, however, he refused, and the auditors, pitying him for his misfortunes, forebore to speak in reference to his somewhat rude interruption of their previous discussion. As the night was dark, they led him to his home, in order that he might not fall into one of the numerous canals, which intersect the goodly city of Amsterdam.

Don Balthazar Orobio became a Jew, and exercised with honor his profession as a physician.

He also distinguished himself by his beneficence towards the poor of all sects, and by the liberality of his religious sentiments.

He died in Amsterdam, in 1687, beloved, esteemed and regretted by all.

RACHEL'S SLEIGH RIDE.

RACHEL'S SLEIGH RIDE.

A STORY FOR "CHANUCKA."



I.

A pleasant evening at Mr. Mendoza's elegant brown stone, \$50,000 mansion on the avenue. A cheering fire nestling in the capacious grate ; Mendoza, enveloped in his well-lined dressing-gown, comfortably ensconced in his new chair,—which Sarah Mendoza had surprised him with last New Year's—his gouty feet encased in warm slippers, and perched on the fender, and his spectacled eyes greedily absorbing the remarks of the evening paper upon the late "fall in gold." What cared he for the snow and wind without, for the cold and misery of the wintry blast, the wretchedness of the poor boy who had but a moment ago timidly tapped at the basement-door, and asked for a little food, only to "keep out the cold?" *He* was comfortable and warm—why should others be cold? And if they were hungry and poor—was that his fault? The world is a "raffle;" there are "numbers" for all, but every speculator can not expect to draw a prize. *He* belonged to the lucky ones ; had money, house, banker's office, a seat in synagogue near the pulpit, a plot in the cemetery—centrally located,—he was a director in the Hospital, belonged to the "club," had a wife, who was a prominent member of four ladies' societies, a daughter who excelled all her *coterie* in beauty and taste. Why should he care, then, if there were some people in the

city less fortunate than he, compelled to dress in cast-off garments, to sit among the "poor worshippers," to be buried by the Charitable Interment Society, who lived on the sixth floor of a wretched tenement-house in Baxter Street, peddled matches, begged for a half-ton of a coal from the Give-a-little-to-the-Poor Association, and had large families crying for bread?

So thought this Mr. Mendoza, who was "universally considered one of the first and finest gentlemen of the Hebrew persuasion in the City of New York." As he laughingly said one day to a member of the brokers' board, he "never could understand why these poor people have such large families. It seems, the poorer a man becomes, the more pleasure he feels in seeing a dozen ragged children crying about him, and calling him 'father.' Children ought to be taxed, and then their number would be speedily reduced." Mendoza was a lively fellow, when he felt in the humor; but the humor was seldom on him, except when any extraordinary streak of luck made him peculiarly jovial. What little pleasantness he did have, however, was reserved for his business acquaintances and the members of the Brokers' Board. At home, he was exceedingly austere and cold.

Raphael Mendoza was a peculiar man, and he was especially eccentric in his ideas of Judaism. At the time when the Insurance Companies made such an outcry against "Jew risks," he did not—nor could not—see the necessity of his co-religionists taking any active agency in removing the obnoxious clause from the circular of the Underwriters. He felt that *he* was not included by the officials in their definition of "Jew Risks," or "Hebrew traders;" they knew him too well, to suppose that he would ever be tempted to burn his office or dwelling, for the sake of the insurance-money; they were always so friendly with him, had wine with him at his house, and dined with him at Crook's. And why should he take upon himself others' troubles, even if they did worship in the same language as he occasionally deemed it proper to do? Mendoza had this fault, among many others, that he would not identify himself with Israel as a people; he was averse to their distinctiveness as a sect. He expressed himself in favor of breaking

down all the barriers that lay between his and the dominant faith. Even that day, he had peremptorily declined a request made by some of his Jewish relatives and friends, to serve as one of the committee in charge of a ball in aid of an "Israelite Benevolent Society," on the ground that it was too sectarian in its objects; but he had, with the same pen, graciously accepted the position of one of the board of fifty managers, who intended to hold a fair in aid of a "Roman Catholic Mission School," whose object was to disseminate the principles of the Holy Catholic religion! This was Mendoza's liberalism!

But to my story.

It was just at the time that Mr. Mendoza was reading the financial reports, and was regarding with anxiety the depression in the market, when his wife—a portly, dignified woman, about forty years old—entered the room, and attracted her husband's attention. She was evidently annoyed at something; so much so, that Mendoza folded his paper, took off his spectacles, and asked her, "What's the matter, Sarah? Anything gone wrong?"

"Everything is wrong, Raphael," said Mrs. Mendoza. "Jenny tells me that Joseph Lazarus was here this afternoon, in a sleigh, left a letter for you, and took our Rachel out for a ride, and she has not yet returned."

"Young Lazarus, again? Didn't I tell Rachel positively to forbid him the house? You know I don't like to speak so myself; but the girl should have told him. Where were you, not to prevent her leaving her home?"

"I was out shopping till five, and then I was compelled to attend a meeting of the "Children's Aid Society," at Mrs. Belknap's. It's too bad. They will be seen riding together—and what will our friends say? And besides I expected the Montmorencys here to-night—George with them, who has just returned from Europe, and who thinks so much of Rachel. But read the letter, and tell me what it contains."

The letter was simply a brief note from young Lazarus' parents, inviting Mr. and Mrs. Mendoza to spend the evening with them, in "good old Hanucka style," hoping that their early acquaintance, and the promise of an enjoyable evening, would induce Mr. and Mrs. M. to accept their invitation.

"Sarah, this thing must stop. It's getting unbearable, that this Lazarus must ever remind me of my 'hateful 'early acquaintance' with him, and his desire to be friendly as of old. My position in society demands that I must give up Jewish intimates one by one,—Lazarus, especially, as he is so infernally pious, and fond of old-time ceremonies. Mendoza, the banker, must not associate with the ex-clothing dealer, the Jew Lazarus. Go to his house to-night! Enjoy his 'Hanucka!' I'll write to him at once, cutting his acquaintance, and advising him to explain to his son how that it will be impossible for him to continue visiting my daughter."

"I fear our great trouble will be with Rachel," said Mrs. Mendoza. "She could never endure a separation from the Lazaruses. Every day in the week she is with them, so that it is almost her home."

"I can't help it; her intimacy must cease, and at once."

The unpleasant interview was terminated by the entrance of the footman, who announced the arrival of the Montmorencys.

II.

Joseph Lazarus had known Rachel Mendoza from childhood. They had always been to each other as brother and sister. Of late, however, Joseph, perceiving the growing coolness of the elder Mendozas, felt that soon her position towards him would be materially changed. He had heard rumors of a favored suitor calling frequently at the house, and he feared the worst. Rachel, too, noticed that Lazarus was occasionally given to moments of abstraction and moodiness, but she could not divine the cause.

That afternoon Lazarus called for her in a sleigh, and she gladly accepted his invitation to a drive through the park. It was cheering, clear weather. The snow lay a foot deep, the wind was not unpleasantly sharp, and the drive was agreeable—at least to Rachel. Lazarus was rather dull at times. It was only on the return-drive, as the stars appeared, and the noise of the city grew still, and the sleigh jingled merrily over the smooth Park

road, that his spirits arose, and his old merriment came upon him. Some unaccountable desire to speak his mind, a consciousness that this would be a favorable, as well as the last opportunity, startled him from his usual mood; and as, for a while, Rachel sat quiet, and the horses trotted swiftly across the snow, the jingling of the bells seemed to have for him a peculiar significance. He no longer heard their "Jingle, jingle, jingle," but it was a repeated "Tell her, Joe!" "Now's your time!" "Take her, Joe!"—and he *did* speak; and right eloquently, too, for he spoke truly and honestly, which is the height of eloquence. How breathlessly he listened for her reply; how cunningly he checked the speed of the horses, for he saw by the street-lamps that he was nearing her home; and how fondly he kissed her when her lips uttered responsively, "I have always loved you, Joseph!"

Leave her at her own house, after that answer, he would not! She must drive to his; to his dear father's and devoted mother's and fond sisters', who all loved her better than even her parents did, and to whom she was now so much the dearer. And when the sleigh stopped at the house of the Lazaruses in Tenth Street, and Joseph lifted out his dear burden, and rang the bell, and with mock gravity introduced her to the family, who were expecting him for supper, as "Mrs. Lazarus, Jr.," the general joy knew no bounds, but the Lazaruses deemed themselves and Rachel the happiest people on earth. And by the time the general congratulations ceased, Joseph had returned the sleigh to the stable, and the family sat down to their *Chanucka* supper.

And there *was* a supper! Such fish had never been fried or stewed before. The tea and the cream, and the sweet, white bread, not to forget the jelly and the herrings, and the cake, were never on better behavior, nor more acceptable to the hearty, healthy appetites of the happy ten, gathered around the festive board. And after supper there was a repetition of the congratulatory scene, the story of the eventful ride was told again, and Joseph must of course kiss his Ma; and sister Judith would have been mortally offended if he had not treated her to a like token of his brotherly affection. And then the

young ones laughed and hugged each other, and told Mary and Bridget, and even Sam, the butcher's boy, who called to know what meat was wanted for the next day. Only Mr. Lazarus was quiet, for a few minutes before Bridget had handed him a note, which was left at the door, and which seemed to give him pain. It was from Raphael Mendoza, and told him in a few, cruel words, that their acquaintance—it could hardly be called friendship—was at an end; that his Joseph must cease his visits, and pay his attentions to a more humble,—and, Mendoza hoped,—more congenial lady than Rachel. Mr. Lazarus said nothing of the letter to those present, but pleaded a headache as his excuse for not joining in their amusements.

Then followed the merry *Chanucka* games. The table was cleared of dishes and cloth, a huge paper was untied, and candies and *bonbons* innumerable were rolled out upon it. A curiously marked *trendl* was produced; and, as each of the company spun it around, the happy faces and merry laughter of all betokened the joy with which the "old-time ceremony" was received. And when the *trendl* had done its share in amusing the company, the more exciting "snap-dragon," in which every one was compelled to join—from father to cook—was hailed with glee. Then succeeded songs and refreshments, and more games, and finally the grand old *Hanucka* hymn, until midnight put an end to the festivities, and all sought their much needed repose. Rachel did not go to her house, Judith insisting that as it was so late she could not do better than to spend the night with her.

But as to the letter, Mr. Lazarus held his peace, preferring to call on Mendoza and seek an explanation before acquainting the family with its contents. Mendoza and he arrived in New York in the same ship, thirty years ago. They were then friendless and almost penniless. Together they shared their first meal and bed; together they traveled through the country, selling petty wares in exchange for worn-out clothing, which brought them small profits on their return to the city. Together they opened a small store, and carried on the humble, but with them honest, business of a "second-hand clothing shop." They prospered, removed to a better local-

ity, bought a large retail establishment on Broadway, and thrived exceedingly well. Mendoza married a woman of high notions, a dislike for the clothing business, and a peculiar aversion for her husband's partner and life-long associations. She gradually sowed dissensions between the two, so that they dissolved partnership just twenty years after their arrival. With their separation, Lazarus' good influence was lost upon Mendoza, who had ever been peculiar in his religious ideas, and who rapidly grew worse and worse, until his Judaism was restricted to a seat in Synagogue, which he attended but twice a year,—the anniversary of his father's death and Atonement Day,—a plot in the cemetery, and a membership in a few societies. He became a speculator also, opening a broker's office, diving into gold, petroleum, and anon attacked by the whiskey mania.

Lazarus was naturally sorry to have received such a note from his old companion, and he mentally determined, before closing his eyes in sleep, to call on him at his office in the morning, and seek an explanation, and also to inform him of his son's desire to marry his daughter Rachel.

But a surprise awaited him the next day. On reaching his store he met a friend,—Ostheim, a broker, who asked him if he had heard the news?

"What news?" indifferently asked Lazarus.

"Of Raphaël Mendoza's failure?" answered Ostheim.

"Of Raphael Mendoza's what?" repeated Lazarus.

"His failure, man. You know he speculated largely in gold and stocks; the firm of Doolittle, Makeanoise & Co., with which he was largely interested, has suspended; and Mendoza to-day is not worth ten thousand dollars."

Mr. Lazarus at once hurried off to Mendoza's office, where he found the unfortunate man alone in his misery. The story was true. The once wealthy Mendoza was a bankrupt. Nobly—as a true friend will always act—Mr. Lazarus offered Mendoza the use of his purse and presence. He said not a word in regard to the letter of the previous night. Mr. Mendoza, in broken accents, craved his pardon for the coldness with which he had lately treated him, and thankfully accepted his offer of assistance.

The failure was not so bad as at first reported. Mendoza is by no means a poor man ; but the lesson was rich in its teachings. He is now more God-fearing in his ways ; more of a Jew in heart as well as in actions ; and he is rapidly becoming respected in the community.

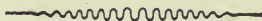
Joseph and Rachel will be married next month. And as a poetical conclusion to my story, it will be interesting to note that Joseph has bought the sleigh and horses which proved so effective in his love-making.

UNABLE TO DIE.



UNABLE TO DIE.

A TALE OF THE GHETTO.



A night of darkness, a night of gloom
Hung o'er the Ghetto, and silence deep
Held sway ; long since within each room
The taper had gone out, and 'all in sleep
Was hush'd : a calm, so full, so deep,
It seemed like Death much more than sleep.

The clouds in volumes roll'd,
The air was sharp and cold,
And no wind still ;
When sudden, through a rift,
In the dark and heavy drift,
Shone the moon chill.

'Twas shown so suddenly, so suddenly pall'd,
That resting on elbow and rubbing his eyes,
The Schulklopper* thought, half in doubt and surprise,
The old wooden hammer he saw gently rise—
The hammer with which he to synagogue call'd,
Morning and evening, the faithful to prayer—
And tap on the wall as it hung ready there.

"No sleep, not a wink, for that hammer!" he cries
To his daughter, who also had heard in the night

* *Schulklopper*—an official of a congregation, whose duty it is to arouse or
"knock up" the members for early morning service.

Those strange and soft blows; and, sadden'd her eyes,
 Says "One of our neighbors, alas! surely dies."
 And then her poor heart a prey to affright,
 "Schmah Yisroel,"* she says, "'tis our rabbi who dies!"
 At that moment the hammer ceases its taps,
 But without, at the door, some one hastily raps,
 And a voice is soon heard there, calling aloud,

"Up, up, and away!
 Wake the people and say,
 They must rise nor delay
 From Schule,† for at day
 The rabbi shall rest in his funeral shroud.

Let Thillim‡ be said
 For him ere he's dead."

Then, through the stillness of the night—
 At day a sad and solemn sight,
 But now how mournful—at each door
 The hammer beats its three short blows
 So well known to all inmates, for
 The life that comes as quickly goes;
 Yes, life's a tide that ebbs and flows.

Her breast the Schulklopfer's daughter beats
 As she stands, all chill'd with bated breath,
 To hear her father tramp, tramp the streets,
 And warn each house of the coming death.
 To her each blow seems a pulse's beat

Of the dying man, and when
 The last one sounds in the gloomy street
 Which is now alive with men;
 "Woe's me," she cries, "the rabbi's dead,
 He died with that last stroke,"
 And tears unbidden fill her eyes,
 And she weeps as her heart were broke.
 But the sacred words of the Thillim restrain
 The rabbi's soul from its flight,
 And death flies hovering round in vain
 To claim his prey that night.

* *Schmah Yisroel*—"Hear, O Israel."

† *Schule*—synagogue.

‡ *Thillim*—psalms.

The rabbi lives when the morning dawns,
 But worse and worse each moment grows,
 His Boch'rim* round his bedside stand,
 They beat the breast, they clasp the hand,
 Each throbbing heart in silence mourns,
 Though plain each eye its sorrow shows.

Some wax they take,

A wick then make,

And measuring the body from the foot to the head,

With this as a guide,

Soon they form by his side

A taper as large as the poor shape on the bed.

And this taper they clothe in a winding sheet,

To the *beschoyim*† bear with trembling feet,

And bury it there as they bury the dead.

But their efforts are vain,

Too soon will the same

Sad fate be meted to the rabbi; they fear

They must measure, in turn, the six planks for his bier.

"Oh! just, powerful God," the grieving Boch'rim cry,

"Reveal, in thy mercy, what else we must try

To save him a while yet. Oh! let him not die!"

And at length, how they start,

With rejoicing at heart,

When a Bocher replies,

With glad hopes in his eyes,

"Come garner for him; let us gather some years,

And perchance the good God will hark to our pray'rs."

Then one sallies forth with a paper in hand,

At the door of each house in turn takes his stand;

And the people inscribe the years, months, days they give

Of their own mortal lives that the rabbi may live.

By her door stood the Schulklopper's daughter to hear

When the Bocher pass'd by on his holy mission.

He said, "For the rabbi will you not give your share?"

"Yes, life, my whole life, with kind heaven's permission;

All, all," with a sob, "though I give from to-day."

"And shall I write that?" "Write, write, no delay."

And the Bocher inscribed the whole life of Hannelé.

* *Boch'rim*—students, or followers. † *Beschoyim*—cemetery,

From that moment the rabbi's health was restored,
 For the pray'rs of the Boch'rim were heard by the Lord;
 But one life was shorter,
 One grave open'd there,
 For the Schulklopper's daughter
 Lay dead on her bier.

And as much as the girl had surrender'd of life,
 So much was the rabbi compell'd to support;
 Ah! little he reck'd of the toil and the strife,
 And little the struggles to be breasted and fought.
 Full joyous, good-humored, he felt at the start,
 And flourish'd again as he flourish'd of old,
 But soon a sad change crept over his heart,
 And his sorrowing looks secret troubles foretold.

 To none was it known
 How that once all alone,
 The rabbi, one evening, while plunged deep in thought,
 Back reclining at his ease,
 His Gemara* on his knees,
 Heard a sweet chant ascend from below in the court.
 And each time that he open'd the lattice he saw
 Before him a maid, young and fair to the sight,
 Whose looks through the veil of the deep shadows bore
 The gay, happy smiles which death froze in his flight.
 "Now, alas!" cried the rabbi, "she might have been free,
 Might have sung the long day like the bird in the air,"
 And in the quiet of night fell his tears silently,
 Fell his tears on the Gemara as it lay open there.
 And once, towards midnight, were heard to arise,
 Around the whole house of anguish loud cries,
 And soon after that, such sobs, short and wild,
 As are utter'd, at birth, by the newly-born child.
 Thus the rabbi. "Unhappy, oh! unhappy the day.
 'Tis I, I alone who this joy stole away."

 Each night he hears a childish cry,
 And songs, celestial in their sweep,
 Such as mothers at the cradle try
 When restless babies they lull to sleep.
 But not to him they brought repose,

* *Gemara*—the oral law and commentaries.

Ah! not to him they brought relief,
 Each song in turn renewed his woes,
 And found response in tears and grief.
 A hearth made desolate by him,
 A girl cut off within her prime,
 He felt how great had been his sin,
 He long'd but to recall his crime.
 Six times arose those sounds of pain,
 The new-born infant's wail six times,
 And then those tender songs again,
 Mingled with plaintive and pleasant rhymes.

Then came a silence which was deep and long,
 Unbroken by cry, by laugh, or by song;
 And the rabbi mused in these long, long years,
 And enacted the life of the girl the day long,
 And sweet though the vision, full bitter his tears,
 All ashes the heart, though the spirit seem'd strong.

First Hannelé stood as the blooming bride,
 Her husband, a strong and kindly man,
 Came loving, guarding by her side,
 And the *woman's* life in earnest began.

The morning meal, ere work begun,
 Her husband to his work depart,
 He saw each day both fought and won,
 He saw the bliss that fill'd her heart.

Day after day the kindly greeting,
 The welcome work, the household care;
 At last, a child their joy completing,
 What other pleasure wish'd they there?

And oh! that infant's look and dress,
 Sure *never* child was half so fair:
 What words can mother's joy express,
 Or paint the pride of father's air.

The boy grows up, and other faces
 In turn appear upon the scene,
 He sees the sixth child born, and traces
 Nothing but peace within his dream.

Nothing but peace, and love, and joys
 Such as pure nuptials ever give.
 Ah! such as these time ne'er destroys
 While hearts beat true and virtues live.

But hark to the sound, again and again,
 The joyous peals of laughter as of yore,
 The songs of jubilation, the music's merry strain,
 The greeting and the welcome at the door.
 "'Tis the *Barmitzvah*,"* cries the rabbi, "of her boy,"
 And full sadly fell his head on his breast,
 He felt in his soul that also this joy
 He had kill'd as he had kill'd all the rest.
 And a silence lasting long came once more.

Years after, came the merry-making song,
 Said the rabbi "To the *Choupe†* she is leading
 Her son; ah! who shall know all the wrong
 I have done, so much all others exceeding."

Whene'er the voice appears

Never sound of woe or tears,

But songs of pleasure, both sweet and unalloy'd;

"A happy mother had she been

But for my folly and my sin,

Yes, 'tis I who her happiness destroy'd."

And so the rabbi lived the young and joyous life

Of the girl who had died his death to stay,

How dearly did he long, but to hear one word of strife

For the songs which came welling up each day.

But his wish, ungranted goes,

Not one mournful sound arose,

His tears to the *Gemara* force their way;

"What!" cried he with a groan,

"Had she naught but pleasure known?"

And he long'd to be blotted from the earth;

For let him whereso go

He heard these songs of woe,

These songs which were daily in their mirth.

* *Barmitzvah*—admission of the lad into the congregation, on his attaining his thirteenth year.

† *Choupe*—canopy held over bride and groom at the wedding ceremony.

But decrepit and old, even death was denied,
 He lived wearily, lamenting his doom ;
 Long since had his friends, near relations all died,
 And had sought sweet repose in the tomb.

So that he could find,
 Amongst those left behind,
 But a few he'd *gebenscht** in their pride,
 Who, now aged and grim,
 Weak, tott'ring and thin,
 Death in vain, with their crutches defied,
 For despite their defiance they died.

Deserted and weary,
 Life void, sad and dreary,
 He stood 'midst his people a poor wreck of time
 Heart and soul deep opprest,
 How he long'd but to rest
 By her who had perish'd for him in her prime.
 How eager he ask'd "Oh ! tell me, I pray,
 Poor maiden betray'd, when comes that release ;
 How long yet you'll live, how distant the day
 When God, in His mercy, shall grant me such peace ?"
 Then once, towards midnight, with the moon on his face,
 He heard a low wail like the cry of the dying ;
 "She is dead, she is dead, praised be God for this grace."
 And where they had left him the night before, there,
 Full early the morrow,
 With weeping and sorrow,
 His Boch'rim discover'd him dead in his chair,
 Whilst on the Gemara his white head was lying.

* *Gebenscht*—blessed.



THE TEPHILIN.

THE TEPHILIN.

AN HUNGARIAN COUNTRY TALE.



Whoever has the misfortune to travel in the passes of the Basca, might indeed find himself in an embarrassing situation if he were left to his choice whether to travel when it rains, or when the ground is frozen hard. During a rain, or immediately after, one can rarely estimate the duration of his journey even if he is going to the nearest village. As often as your horse digs his hoof into the soft yielding mud, it requires a double horse power to draw him out again. In general this new horse power is urged on by the coachman's whip, which never ceases its flagellations ; and, when the whip cord becomes no longer serviceable, then the handle must be brought into play.

On the other hand, when it freezes, the disagreeableness of travelling in the mud is set off by the dangers of a slippery road. After riding over such an ice-bound street, nothing but a rather rickety woman could be formed out of a man's rib.

In the year 1854, in the midst of winter, business engagements brought me to this neighborhood. The cold was intense, and the streets were all frozen. It was only in the morning, after a long night's rest, that I could tell whether my bones were yet unbroken by the many falls of the day before, and that I could thank heaven for

sparing me any misfortune. However, what I was daily in fear of, at last actually came to pass. I had occasion to employ a wagon ; we had scarcely started, when the wheel suddenly struck a rock, and, breaking, the wagon overturned, and I was unceremoniously thrown out. I fell between two frozen lumps of ice, and, in vain, strove to extricate myself. Whether the pain I felt was caused by my fall, or by the previous jostling of the wagon, I was then unable to say. My coachman, who came out of the affair lucky enough only to have had his finger broken, his head wounded, and a leg badly injured, began to cry out ; and I, having nothing better to do, followed suit in my topmost pitch. Luckily the village was near, and our cries brought out a few peasants, who carried us indoors after considerable trouble. The building was what they call an inn. They placed me in a pretty large room which contained two beds, a chest, a long table and some benches. It was both the reception and bed room of the host. Near by was a smaller room, which characterized the business part of the building. But the host assured me that, since the existence of the town council, not a soul had remained there over night ; for this reason, we were, as is usually expressed in advertisements regarding steamboat berths, surrounded with every comfort. He offered me one of the beds, which was well bolstered, whilst he retained the other ; an arrangement which I accepted, especially as I couldn't very well help myself. And, as the accommodations of the establishment extended no further, my coachman was lodged with a neighboring farmer.

I suffered agonizing pains, especially in my left leg. The clothes had to be cut away in order to get them off. A maid was despatched to the house of the village priest, who lay sick in bed and whom the physician attended daily. It happened luckily that the girl met the physician, and, after the lapse of not more than an hour, the doctor was at my bedside. He examined me carefully and gave me the joyful assurance that, by keeping very quiet, I would be able at the end of six or eight weeks to get quite well. The doctor ruled as impracticable my desire to be put in more comfortable quarters, inasmuch as the village contained no better, and it would have

been dangerous to move me. He, however, promised to send me a competent nurse and to visit me daily, in both of which respects he faithfully kept his word,

In this way I dragged out three weeks of pain, although, in the interval, I had a very entertaining companion in the person of my host, commonly called Squire Mathis. He was very kind and attentive. He manifested an interest and sympathy for me which I scarce expected to find in a farmer's hut. As soon as the physician deemed it admissible to move me, he told me that if I desired he would take me to his own house, about a mile distant. I readily consented. Four peasants came after me, and, carefully stretched on a litter, I was borne to my new home. This arrangement gave me entire satisfaction, as I was about to receive more comfortable quarters, and my physician was a co-religionist—an Israelite.

It was the day before I changed my residence, about one o'clock in the afternoon; my nurse was busy in the kitchen, and Mathis was seated at my bedside, watching the slightest movement I should make in order that he might immediately respond to my wants, should I call for anything. Suddenly, the door opened, a stranger appeared at the threshold. He had the features of an Israelite. He entered, and, after a respectful salutation, inquired whether Squire Mathis lived there.

"I am he," replied my host, "what is it?"

The Jew thereupon took from his coat pocket a small worn out green bag which contained a set of *Tephilin*, (phylacteries) and, without saying a word, handed to my host.

Scarcely did he obtain sight of them that he sprang from his seat and uttered a joyful exclamation. He eagerly seized the bag from the stranger and pressed it to his bosom; two large tear drops trembled on his eyelids.

"What have you to say to me!" inquired Mathis, handing the *tephilin* back again to the stranger.

"I am to tell you much of good and pleasantness. Matters are going on well, and, if possible, I am to bring back a thousand dollars."

"Where?" inquired Mathis.

The stranger cast his eyes in the direction of my bed. He seemed to notice me for the first time. He looked at me distrustfully and answered softly :

"I shall leave here only in a couple of hours, after my horses have been fed."

"Do you intend going away again, to-day?"

"Certainly," replied the stranger, "I must reach Szegedin to-day, in order to meet the night train."

"I will go out then, and feed the horses," said Mathis. He beckoned to the stranger, and both quitted the room together. They had evidently more to say to each other which they would not repeat in my hearing.

This little episode was calculated to rouse my curiosity in the highest degree ; whilst I was left to myself in the room, I began to make all kinds of reflections and surmises, puzzling my brain over what I had heard, and wondering what in the world these two men had to say to each other that I was not permitted to hear.

An hour passed away, when the two made their re-appearance. Mathis went to his chest and took therefrom a well-filled purse. He opened it and, counting out very distinctly the sum called for, handed it to his guest who put the same into his pocket. Then he gave him an additional amount in small bills, adding, at the same time, "Here are your traveling expenses."

I saw that Mathis felt a little ill at ease. The stranger had eaten nothing since morning. Mathis was well aware that the laws of the Jewish religion prevented his guest eating the food that was cooked in his kitchen, and he was embarrassed as to what he could offer him. My meals were cooked daily according to strict *kosher* requirements, and I still had a portion of my dinner left. I whispered to my nurse to run to the kitchen and bring up the remains. I received the hearty thanks of my host and his guest, the latter of whom partook of my cheer in a manner that gave evidence of his extreme hunger, and manifested complete satisfaction at the excellence of the food.

He had scarcely finished eating, when the servant announced that the horses were ready to start. The Jew bade his host an affectionate good by, bestowed on me a friendly farewell, turned from the room and immediately drove off.

Mathis then sat down again by my bedside. He seemed sad, and more than once he drew his hand across his eyes to wipe away a drooping tear. I felt compassion for him without knowing the cause of his sorrow, and I asked him whether his late guest had brought him any bad news.

"That is just as one might take it," he replied. "Yet why should I be unthankful to our good God? I have heard that my only well-beloved son is well; that, at any rate, is gracious intelligence."

"How, Mathis! You have a son, and, though I have already been here three weeks, I have never heard you speak of him? Ah, he is perhaps enrolled with the army, and you are now buying him off. Is it not so?"

"Let us drop the subject, dear sir; it will do us little good to discuss these things here. There is no harm in trusting you, but wait, rather, until you have been removed to the doctor's, and, if you will allow me to visit you, I will cheerfully confide my secret to you. It will even do me good to speak of it."

The next day, I was brought to the neighboring village, to the house of my physician, where a room had been made ready for me. Notwithstanding the care that had been bestowed on me, there was a fear that the result of my injuries might still prove serious. But I felt certain of such good and successful treatment that the bare confidence of recovery accelerated my convalescence.

Mathis kept his promise; he paid me a call one fine afternoon, and, as I was strong enough to listen, he began the relation of the not uninteresting story of the *Tephilin*. I shall content myself with its mere substance.

Alma and Ratany are two villages not widely separated from each other. The latter is chiefly inhabited by Germans, Swabians, who came into the place with the Emperor Joseph II. In the former, a more miscellaneous horde is congregated, consisting of Hungarians, Serbians and Germans. Here there lived several poor Jewish families, and, among them, Schlome, who kept an inn. As the profits from this source were not sufficient to support a family, he started a small miscellaneous business, selling, among other things, wax candles, soap, tobacco,

pipes, matches and salt. This little business was Schlome's only means of keeping his family in decent circumstances ; for his inn brought him nothing, and the authorities forced him to let his surrounding ground because he could not work it himself six days in the week ; it is an undeniable truth that the Jew with his two days of rest,—his own and that of the Christians (on which he was not permitted to work), can not be a successful farmer.

Still, with all this, I do not see the right of any government to make the cultivation of the soil a burthen to the Jew ; for, on the same reasoning, if a tailor were prevented from attending to his own business himself by some sickness, they could compel him to close up his workshop.

Schlome lived a happy life. His only daughter was a thrifty little house-keeper, who attended to the kitchen and garden, and assisted her father in the management of his business.

It was a bright Summer morning in the year 1849. As usual, Schlome rose with the break of day, put on his *talith* and laid his *tephilin*, and began to say his morning prayers. He had just concluded, when a man, pale as death, came rushing breathless into the room, and, falling exhausted on a bench, exclaimed :

"Schlome, help me, I can go no further!"

The man that made his entrance so suddenly was Mathis, the richest farmer in Ratany. The day previous, insurgents had forced an entry—the Hungarian revolution was then at its height—and had seized quarters in the houses of the peasants. An officer of high rank had quartered himself with Mathis.

The night was sultry and the officer could not obtain a wink of sleep in the close atmosphere of the room ; so he directed his servant to take a straw mattress into the court-yard, in order that he might sleep in the open air. The servant had carelessly place his loaded gun against the kitchen door, and then gone to bed. Mathis rose early in the morning, opened the kitchen door, the gun fell down and exploded with a sharp report—and the officer lay weltering in his blood. Mathis, frightened, stepped out, lifted up the gun which was at his feet, and, at the same moment, the startled servant of the officer,

roused from his sleep, rushed out. He beheld his master bathed in blood and the peasant with the murderous weapon in his hands ; the conclusion that Mathis had committed the murder, was soon arrived at.

"You German dog," he growled, "You have shot my master!"

Undoubtedly he felt himself too weak to seize hold of the powerful looking Mathis ; so, half naked as he was, he ran through the streets gathering his comrades together. Mathis felt the danger of his situation and that, if he came into the ranks of the insurgents, he would be irredeemably lost. A hasty flight was his only means of safety. He did not reflect long, ran into the garden, sprang over the bushes, and shrubs and rocks towards Alma.

As he for the first time obtained sight of this village, he observed armed insurgents moving towards Alma on the highway. In the fear and agony of the moment, he sought concealment in the house of Schlome. Schlome was under some slight obligations to him. From him alone could he expect assistance. The other inhabitants of Alma were all in sympathy with the rebels. The inn was at the outskirts of the village. He dared not go further without fear of discovery.

So we see Mathis, frenzied and alarmed, appearing in Schlome's house.

"My God!" the latter exclaimed, "what is the matter? What do you ask of me? Speak!"

In a few words, Mathis related the events of the morning.

"Well, what shall I do?" repeated Schlome.

"Hide me, that I may escape my bloodthirsty pursuers. The plundering Hungarians will soon be here, and will ransack the whole village in search of me."

"But, for Heaven's sake, Mathis, you know how little protection this building can afford you. Where can I put you to ensure your safety?"

"I do not know. You must devise that, Schlome.—Only do not let me fall into their hands."

"If they catch you with me, then we are both dead men. You know they are not apt to make much ceremony with a Jew."

"Good God! What shall I do?"

"We are both lost."

"No, Schlome, why should I, without any cause, drag you into my unlucky plight? I will depart; and should fate bring me in the power of my pursuers, then may God help me! But go to the village of D——, where my son is stopping with his grandmother. Bear him my remembrance, and dying blessing."

"But you misunderstand me, Mathis. By no means shall you expose yourself to danger, by leaving my house. Do you suppose me selfish enough or so destitute of friendship for you as to put your life in danger for the sake of saving my own? You have sought shelter with me, and you shall have it. I have a strong arm, and shall use it in your defence. So long as I can wield it, no one shall menace you with impunity."

"Hark! do you hear nothing?"

At this moment, Gertrude, Schlome's daughter, declared that six armed Hungarians were approaching the village.

Then a rare thought suddenly occurred to Schlome. He took from the cupboard an old *talith* and a bag containing *tephilin*, both heirlooms of his lately deceased father. Schlome caused Mathis to bare his left arm, around which he wound one portion of the *tephilin*, and placed the remaining part around his brow; at the same time, he robed him with the *talith*, whilst giving him the following advice:

"Whoever may enter, take no notice of him. Remain standing, as if you were saying your prayers, and lift up your eyes often and move your body fervently. Do not let any one disturb you in your devotions. Whatever questions they may put to you, I shall take it upon myself to answer. Hold this book in your hand and face the East. As a further precaution, take those spectacles, a relic of my grandfather's, and let them straddle your nose."

Mathis followed these instructions implicitly. A very few minutes afterwards, several armed insurgents burst into the room, others surrounded the house. Mathis began to put the upper half of his body in vigorous perpendicular motion. He might have been taken for a saint.

He was thus able to conceal his violent trembling, and to make the clattering of his teeth seem as if engaged in the sincerity of prayer.

"Jew!" exclaimed the leader of the insurgents; "is there no peasant from Ratany concealed here?"

Schlome, with ready wit, replied: "What have we got to do with the Ratanians? They are not our brothers; because they are Germans and we are Hungarians."

Whoever understands anything of the character of the Hungarians and their national pride, especially at the time of which we are writing, will at once perceive that Schlome's answer was in itself almost sufficient to dispel any suspicion which Mathis's pursuers may have entertained.

"Oh, well, we will hunt through the house," spoke the leader, "and should we catch the villain here, then both he, you, and that blabberer there"—pointing to Mathis—"will be forthwith cut to pieces."

"As you please," said Schlome. "But I tell you that it is a shame to look for a concealed traitor in the house of an honest Hungarian. Why do you not go to the Germans?"

The leader of this gang was quite convinced of Schlome's sincerity; but, in order that he might have the satisfaction of doing something after he got into the house, he ordered four of his followers to make the search. In the meanwhile, he himself peered into every corner of the room, wherever a concealment might be possible, and then he turned to Mathis.

"What do you say, chatterer? Is there really no one hidden here?"

Mathis turned his eyes, balanced his head, and moved his lips aloud.

"He wont answer you for an hour," said Schlome, "not until he is done with his prayers."

"*Ohr** a little for me," said the leader of the insurgents.

"What, are you a Jew?" inquired Schlome of the latter.

"Eh, what!" said the man. "That is immaterial; we

* Pray.

are at war now, and Jew and Christian are one and the same."

Schlome thought this neither the time nor place for an argument against such an assertion. In the meantime, the four men returned. They had, as might well be imagined, discovered nothing ; and the whole crowd soon after departed to make further search through the village. Mathis remained with Schlome the whole of that and the following day and night, when the news came that the Hungarians had withdrawn from Ratany.

Before Mathis quitted his deliverer, he clasped his hand affectionately, and said :

"As long as I live, I shall never forget your self-sacrificing kindness to me, and the debt I owe you ; and how I should have been lost had you not so humanely and generously come to my assistance when those savage fiends threatened me with death. Farewell, kind friend. The time may come when I can reward your hospitality. My hand and heart are forever at your command."

Mathis took the *tephilin* and *talith* with him, as mementoes of his past danger, and soon was lost to sight.

* * * * *

A man nearly dying with thirst, in Alma, one evening sent his daughter, aged ten years, to the inn, to get some brandy. She did not return. The thirsty mortal impatiently awaited her coming for a full hour ; but the girl did not come. Enraged at the child's delay, he armed himself with a cane, and started out after her, firmly resolved to teach her, by a physical demonstration, that she must not allow a thirsty father to suffer so. He arrived at Schlome's, and was by him informed that the girl had started for home an hour ago, taking with her the alcoholic beverage. The angry Servian rushed homewards again ; but his daughter had not returned ; it was already ten o'clock.

Evidently there was something wrong. The neighbors were awakened from their sleep, some were sent into the street and others to the houses of the missing child's intimate friends. Their labors were in vain, and soon numerous suspicious thoughts were being hazarded. By

some unlucky circumstance, one of the readiest, a Ser-
vian, gave it as his opinion that the girl was dead.

"The Jews," he said, "use the blood of Christian children in their sacrifices ; Schlome has undoubtedly slaughtered the child."

The edict had gone forth. The old man's doctrine found a ready response in the hearts of all his hearers. The whole village was alarmed, every one was howling and screaming ; their only cry was :

"Schlome has murdered a Christian child ; we will kill him, too. We will destroy all blood-drinkers ! He must yield up the dead girl ! We will tear him to pieces !"

Such and similar exclamations foretokened the danger that was threatening Schlome. All the peasants armed themselves with weapons of torture and destruction, and, as if there were no longer any doubt as to Schlome's guilt, rushed towards the inn with revengeful cries.

But Schlome had been forewarned by some friendly hand. A Jewish resident of Alma had hastened to him, and pictured to his mind the storm that was about to burst over his head. When the leader of this rabble came to the inn, he found nobody but Gertrude, Schlome's young daughter, who, suffering under a severe fever, was unable to follow her father in his flight. Time pressed, Gertrude pledged herself to hurry after him ; and, as he thought himself convinced that she suffered no danger, he left her at home, and fled alone.

This flight which the peasants, after marching through the house, convinced themselves Schlome had taken, was to their minds sufficient evidence of his guilt. Their wrath increased, and they seized hold of glasses and bottles, and knocked them around the room, breaking windows and doors. Poor Gertrude lay trembling on her couch, and rude hands seized her person and tore at her hair, and bound her fast.

"Do not hurt her," said the village magistrate ; "for, even if she be not entirely guiltless, yet we must discover, through her, where her father has concealed himself."

I will believe, for humanity's sake, that the magistrate spoke these words out of pity, and to save the girl from further harm. I am almost convinced now that he did,

inasmuch as, at a later period, he is said to have expressed a doubt about Schlome's guilt, as far as the lost girl was concerned ; because, though Jews may use the blood of Christian children in their Easter sacrifices, this festival usually occurs in the spring of the year ; and the missing child was lost in July. So pleasant it is to reason philosophically, and to know that passion and prejudice often blind the eyes of men to the truth and probabilities of things.

Mathis happened to be in a neighboring house. To him Schlome hastened, in the wildness of despair.

"Mathis! Mathis! Now you can repay me; now you can save me from the undeserved fury of an enraged mob!"

Schlome hastily related what had happened. Mathis took his hand lovingly in his own, and said :

"Fear not, Schlome. Should it become necessary, I will defend you with my life, even as you risked yours for me. It can hardly enter their minds that you are with me."

"Yet," replied Schlome, "I fear I was observed to enter here."

"However," said Mathis, "my son shall go to Alma, and bring me the news from there."

Mathis sent his son Peter, aged sixteen, after acquainting him with the events of the morning, over to Alma, to reconnoitre, and to see how matters stood. Peter went, but almost immediately afterwards returned, looking deathly pale, and announced that intelligence of the loss of the Christian child had already reached Ratany ; that Schlome had been seen to steal his way into the house, and that several of the rabble were approaching, determined to enter and search through the house, and, if they find Schlome, drag him to Alma.

"Go through the garden into the field," said Mathis to his son, "and over to Alma. You can get there quickly. It is daylight now, and perhaps the child may have been found."

Schlome likewise requested Peter to look after Gertrude, and to see whether she were safe.

"We have no time to lose," said Mathis to Schlome. "Pull this dressing gown over your head, and lie down

on this bench. I will cover you with my furs. Keep quiet, and leave matters to me. Should the mob press in, I will so arrange it that they will carry me off instead of you. Then, when I am gone, put on my broad brimmed hat, go through the garden, and take the road to D—; you will find a Jewish congregation there, and one of your Rabbis, whose duty it will be to protect you. By the time the baffled crowd discover who I am, you will be in safety.”

Schlome obeyed orders. Mathis took from his trunk the *tephilin* presented him by Schlome, untied them, and wound them around his arm, as he had previously been instructed, paying little heed, however, whether or not he had them exactly right, put on the old *talith*, and set Schlome's hat on his head. Thus he awaited the attack which could not long be delayed. A loud clamor from the street proclaimed the approach of the peasants' inquisition.

Mathis stood in front of the wall, and made religious gesticulations.

Ten or twelve peasants rushed into the room.

“Aha! There is the blood drinker. Away with him to Alma!”

Two peasants seized Mathis by the arms and dragged him out of the room, whilst the others pushed him from behind. He held the *talith* so tightly around his face that his identity could not be discovered, and only the *tephilin* band around his forehead was visible. The crowd grew as they proceeded in their course. In their mad zeal they never thought of pulling away his disguise.

They had already gone three-fourths of the way. Mathis began to tire of their pulling and pushing. Reflecting that Schlome must, by this time, be secure, he resolved to put an end to this masquerade. With a powerful effort, he freed himself from the grasp of his tormentors, threw aside the *talith*, tore the *tephilin* from his arm and head, and uttered a loud and defiant laughter.

The tumultuous rabble were dumbfounded. “Mathis! Mathis!” they exclaimed: “godfather Mathis! cousin Mathis! neighbor Mathis!”

Such were their cries in the first moments of their as-

tonishment. But soon the spirit of revenge was again dominant in their breasts. The affair, which they intended for a tragedy, had too much the appearance as if it was to turn out a comedy. It was the furthest from their minds that Mathis should make a laughing stock of them. Said one :

“Mathis, that will do you no good. You have hidden the Jew, and we won’t let you go till you deliver him into our hands.”

Another cried out :

“Out with the Jew ; give him up ! If we don’t bring him back, the people of Alma will burn our houses over our heads.”

And the people began tearing at the *talith* with the fierce spirit of vandalism, until they had torn it to tatters. The *tephilin* might have shared the same fate, had not Mathis, with great forethought, hidden them in his inner coat pocket. Mathis was not in the pleasantest of situations, for the people had resolved to take him to Alma, whose inhabitants would soon bring him to terms, and compel him to disclose the place of Schlome’s concealment.

Suddenly, they saw Mathis’ son, Peter, running towards them. He was making signals with his hands, but which they could not very well understand, until he came nearer, when he exclaimed :

“They have got the girl ; I found her : she has suffered no harm !”

The thing happened thus :

When Peter left for Alma, as he approached the village, in a little by-path, he came across a young girl who was weeping and wringing her hands. Peter suspected she was the very one they were making such a noise about. He stopped and began talking to her, and, after considerable effort, by much questioning and persuasion, he ascertained that the brandy she had been sent to get for her father, began, in a short time, to have an enticing effect on her lips ; and these being brought in frequent contact with the liquor in question, soon manifested a result which diminished the quantity of fluid in the bottle, while it at the same time exerted a not altogether brightening effect on her mind. As a consequence, instead of taking the straight road, and being a little too inebriated

to see whether she was going home or somewhere else, very naturally did get somewhere else, and a stupor seizing her, she fell into a sound sleep, from which she only awoke a few hours before Peter made her acquaintance. As her eyes opened, they fell on the half-emptied bottle in her hand, and the fear of what she might expect from her father, drew from her bitter tears and lamentations.

Peter felt compassion for her, and to the eloquence of his words in attempting to persuade her to go home, he added money more than sufficient to purchase the deficiency of liquor, and save the child from its father's cruel wrath.

The house in which Gertrude was lying was surrounded by a mass of bloodthirsty peasants. They wanted, by all means, to have Gertrude out, that they might revenge themselves on her young blood. The poor girl within heard their loud clamor, and trembled.

Suddenly, everything without was still. Peter arrived, leading the missing child by the hand. He was at once surrounded and eagerly questioned; in a few words, he told them what had happened, and the weeping girl at his side bore witness to the truth of what he said. Then this rabid horde slunk away one by one. A few only were ashamed of their conduct—many were embarrassed as to how they might excuse their rashness; and some still held fast to the opinion that, if the missing child had not been found, then Schlome must have murdered her.

Gertrude could scarcely believe her senses when Peter hurried to her side, and told her the joyful news; how that the lost girl had been found, and that she was now safe and could go with him to her father, who, likewise, had nothing more to fear.

The mention of her father's name recalled him to her mind, and, breaking into sobs, she cried out:

"My father! Where is my father? Oh, let me see him! Is he safe?"

"Do not be alarmed, Gertrude," replied Peter; "your father is with mine: no evil has befallen him, and you can go with me and see him."

Gertrude sprang from her couch for joy. But the fever that she had, had weakened her so much, that she had

scarcely stood up when she fell senseless to the floor. Peter was somewhat embarrassed. He threw himself on his knees before her, and begged her, with tears in his eyes, to awake. He smoothed back her long silken hair from her round, pale face, and irresistibly pressed a long, burning kiss on her bright, red lips.

Her eyes opened.

"Where is my father?" was her first question.

"He will be here, soon," Peter replied; "I shall bring him with me directly. But—I cannot leave you alone, Gertrude; you are ill."

"Oh, no, good Peter; I feel much better now, and if I only have my father near me again, then all will be well with me."

Peter went away sorrowfully. We already know in what company he came across his father. He related how everything was cleared up in Alma. The narrative of these events, and the satisfactory reappearance of the lost child, put the crowd somewhat at ease. They regretted, however, that they had dealt so harshly with Mathis, who, being rich, was all in all to them—godfather, neighbor, cousin and dearest of friends. The latter was too shrewd a man not to derive some advantage from this circumstance.

Peter ascertained that Schlome had fled to D——, and thither Peter hastened to find him—both to quiet his fears and to bring him home again to Gertrude, as he had promised. He found him, and giving him the gratifying assurance of his safety, accompanied him to his home. The meeting between father and daughter was, as might well be expected, cordial and affectionate; and, as Peter observed their love for each other, a sudden feeling of affection began to struggle in his breast. Gertrude raised her beautiful blue eyes to his, those eyes in which her whole soul breathed forth, and said:

"You were our protecting angel, Peter."

Then Peter really felt that he loved her, and was prepared to have his throat cut, if necessary, for Gertrude's sake. It grew late, and, as Peter felt that it was time to go, he rose, took his hat in hand, and, pressing Gertrude's fair fingers to his lips, breathed on them his ardent love, and bade her a fond good night. His journey

home was dark and drear, and grim phantasms danced in his giddy brain. He loved ; but could he marry her ? Gertrude was a Jewess, and he, alas ! a Protestant.

* * * * *

Schlome suffered considerable loss by this little disturbance, at Alma, for the rabble had not dealt very gently with his wares. But he was soon consoled, and once more his affairs were put in order. Gertrude again rejoiced in the bloom of health, and there was not a man in all Alma who did not soon regret the annoyance and disasters that had befallen her and her dear father. Gertrude, too, thought often of Peter, who, besides, paid many calls at Alma, on Sundays.

One evening, in the quiet of his reflections, Schlome bethought himself of his *tephilin*, and that Mathis still retained them. They were given to Schlome by his father, and he regarded them as an heirloom, as something which he could not part with. It seemed to him sinful that he should allow such holy relics to remain in the profaned hands of a stranger. He made up his mind, therefore, to go to Ratany, the next morning, pay his friend a call, and obtain the *tephilin* from him.

An old Jewish author says : "The height of heaven, the depth of the earth, and the extent of the human heart, are immeasurable." Inasmuch as the mathematical determination of the periphery and diameter of this earthly sphere was at that period an unexplained secret to the good man, we must make due allowance in accepting his parallel ; but, in so far as it was his object to express, in a striking manner, the unfathomable mystery of the human soul, we must admit that the simile evinces poetical inspiration.

After what we have seen of the friendly relations that existed between Mathis and Schlome, any idea of the severance of the friendly link would seem preposterous. Yet, it took but a few minutes' colloquy to rupture what, until then, had seemed an irrefragable attachment. Let us see how this matter was brought about.

Schlome called on Mathis as he had previously resolved. Of course, the meeting between the two friends was cordial in the extreme.

"Heaven preserve you, Schlome, what lucky circumstance brings you here?"

"A small matter, Mathis; it occurred to me, last night, that you still have my *tephilin*, and you will pardon me if I have come after them."

"My dear friend, Schlome, you don't mean that! See, now, these *tephilin* have become of redoubled interest to me, since they have been the means, on different occasions, of saving both our lives. How can I part with them?"

"But, Mathis, they are precious family relics, and I dare not give them to you."

"Can you not buy others?"

"I do not need others, for I have a fine set for daily use. These, however, I cannot give up."

"Will you take ten dollars for them?" asked Mathis. The blood mantled to Schlome's cheek as he answered:

"For shame on you, Mathis, to think that I would barter for an heirloom. They are priceless to me, and I must have them."

"But I will not give them to you."

"You must. I never gave you them; you took them without my knowledge or consent. The *tephilin* are holy emblems of our religion, and I dare not leave them in unclean hands."

Mathis, already somewhat displeased with Schlome's obstinacy, at the words "unclean hands," became greatly enraged. He ran to his coffer, tore open the lid, and brought out the *tephilin*, and, flinging them on the table, cried out with passion:

"There, take your *tephilin*, and leave my house, or these 'unclean hands' will massacre you! Never darken my doors again with your presence; but you shall think of Mathis as long as you live!"

The door closed on Schlome. He heaved many a sigh as he wended his way home, and reflected on the uncertainties of this life. His best friend had now become his enemy; a trifle had made a deep breach in their friendship, and would it ever be mended?

Mathis, too, had cause for reflection. He conceived it a religious duty to revenge himself for what he considered an outrage on himself and his religious faith. He

formed the bitter determination to ruin his former friend, but now deadly enemy. A plan was soon adopted.

On that same day we find Mathis at Alma, in close conversation with the landlord. He knew very well that the term for which Schlome had rented his house was about expiring. Mathis accordingly offered to take the house for a number of years, and pay as much as five hundred dollars a year. Schlome had been paying only three hundred. The landlord replied that he was bound to give Schlome the refusal for the same amount that Mathis offered to pay; but Mathis was well aware that Schlome was not in a condition to afford paying such a high rent. He was not surprised, therefore, when the landlord announced to him that the building was his, and that Schlome would move. Schlome had heard, with pain, that Mathis was at the bottom of these proceedings, and his heart sank within him.

At the end of his term, Schlome packed up his wares, left his old house with Gertrude, and took two rooms in a remote quarter of the village. Mathis moved to Alma, and entrusted Peter with the inn at Ratany.

Peter was not very well pleased with the turn affairs had taken. He still cherished his old affection for Gertrude. But how could he visit her, when their parents were on such bad terms together? Love devises a number of ways to overcome difficulties. Gertrude was in the habit of going to market every Tuesday afternoon to bring thither the little articles she had embroidered during the week. Peter soon heard of this, and, as the stated day came round, he regularly saddled his horse, went into the highway and met her; he rode with her to market, and rendered her every assistance when she seemed in need of help. Then, when her work was disposed of, he would accompany her home again. Every Tuesday was a holiday for Peter.

Once Gertrude began to think. Wasn't it very wrong to encourage this young man, whom she could never hope to marry? "If he were only an Israelite," she would say. And then she would sigh, and sit for hours in deep thought. Yet, when Tuesday rolled around, again were they both found together, on their way to market. Is not love a very strange thing?

This went on for two full years. But one day Gertrude did not come. In vain Peter waited for her.

"Poor Gertrude must be sick," he murmured. "Why she looked very pale last Tuesday, and complained of not feeling well."

Peter had indeed surmised the truth : for Gertrude was very sick. Her work was resting idle, and her distaff was quietly lying with no fair hands to set it in operation. And here was poor Schlome, with hardly a cent in this world, who could satisfy the parched lips of his beloved daughter with nothing but cold water. The night before, he had sold the last piece of property that he could spare for bread. He little thought that, on the following day, he would have to fast, and that the next day there would be no better prospect. Gertrude's illness, however, filled him with great anxiety. What could he do for her? She herself, the prop of his house, and surmising her father's thoughts, smiling stretched her hands towards him and said: "Do not mind me, father, I am not hungry. Whilst I am sick, I need nothing; and, when I recover, all shall be well again."

Schlome turned his head aside, wiped away a warm tear that was about to roll from his eyelid, and, going to the closet, took therefrom the small bag containing the *tephilin*, and left the house.

Was he going to say his prayers? Why, the pious man has done that once already to-day. Was he going to sell them? Who would give him the smallest sum in payment for them?

Schlome went straight to the inn, to Mathis. "Mathis," he said, and handed him the *tephilin*, "once, you offered me ten dollars for these; if they have not lost all worth to you, take them in pledge and lend me two dollars, else I must see my poor Gertrude perish before my very eyes."

For two years, the once intimate friends had not seen each other. The shrunken, hungry, and wretched look of Schlome, as he appeared tottering and trembling before Mathis, filled the latter with solicitude. The knowledge that he had made this man unhappy,—this man who had once saved his life, filled his breast with remorse, and his heart sank within him. That man who once be-

fore stood before him, with a strong arm, and had taken his hand in friendly grasp, now stood there bowed down with grief, and he alone the cause of all this misery.

Ashamed and sorrow-stricken, Mathis grasped his hand, whilst the tears rolled down his cheeks. "My friend," he said, "I have done wrong, pardon me. Here, take this bank note: I need no pawn from you. We have been on bad terms together, but I have not forgotten that you are yet 'the honest Schlome.'"

Schlome took the money. He could not speak, and, almost choking with emotion, he gasped the words "thank you, Mathis," and hastened to the relief of his sick child.

And as Mathis beheld his retreating form, in his remorse he exclaimed :

"God pardon my sin. If he did anger me, I could have withdrawn myself from his friendship ; but what right had I to snatch from him his little bread !"

Two hours later, he sent to Ratany for Peter. The latter came.

"My son," said Mathis, "Schlome is badly off."

Peter trembled.

"His daughter, Gertrude," continued his father, "is very ill."

Peter turned pale.

"Schlome is no longer my friend,—that is true,—but I must not let him starve, and his daughter shall not perish for want of help."

"Certainly not," cried Peter.

"Do you know what, Peter."

"Well, father ?"

"Take a bag of flour and one of potatoes to Schlome, together with this bottle of Tokay and this paper of cake, the latter of which you will give the sick girl with your own hand,—and look around a little, Peter, and see if they, perhaps, need anything else."

Peter was only too happy to fulfill this errand, and, with somewhat more foresightedness than, as he supposed, his father possessed, added to the store of provisions, a fine pair of chickens, some butter, cheese, eggs, and other little delicacies. In another hour, he was at Gertrude's bedside, and reproached her and her father for not having long ago confided their necessities to him.

He forthwith despatched a man after the doctor, and did not leave until the latter came, assured him there was no danger and promised to visit his patient daily.

From this day forth, Peter was at Schlome's house every day, and was, at length, the happy means of effecting a thorough reconciliation between his father and Schlome. Then Mathis came over, too, and visited the sick girl, who, under such kindly care, was fast recovering. Then it was, too, that both Schlome and Mathis suspected the feeling entertained for each other by the young persons, and, as they reflected on what differences separated them, they shuddered at the consequences that might ensue.

In the meanwhile, the affection between Peter and Gertrude was on the increase. Mathis and Schlome, one day, unburthened their minds to each other. They both saw the folly of allowing such a state of things to continue. It was deemed advisable, however, to wait until Gertrude's recovery, before undertaking such an unpleasant duty.

It happened very suddenly, that Schlome was taken dangerously sick. The physician said the illness was brought on by over exertion and anxiety of mind, and expressed great solicitude lest it might prove fatal. Mathis at once took up his residence with Schlome and tended him during his entire illness, promptly answering all his wants. Matters were growing serious.

"Mathis," said Schlome, one day, "I feel my end approaching, and when I go Gertrude will have no earthly protector. But I shall die in peace, for I know your trusty heart; and of one thing you must assure me, that my dying moments may be without pain. Promise me never to tempt her from the faith of her fathers, but on the contrary, to strengthen her in that belief when there may come temptations to make her swerve from the path of duty."

Mathis gave him his hand and promised. In a few hours, Schlome breathed his last.

Gertrude wept bitterly, and sorrow was in Mathis' heart. Peter wept with Gertrude, and grieved with Mathis.

But neither tears nor sorrow for the departed can triumph over the power of Time.

Mathis wished Gertrude to make his house her home and to undertake the management of the inn ; but inasmuch as the pious Jewess refused to take her meals at her protector's table, she was placed with a Jewish family in the village ; she however passed the forenoon and afternoon in the dwelling of Mathis, and it is scarcely necessary to add that from this time Peter visited his father's house much oftener than formerly.

Mathis soon perceiving that such a state of things could not long be endured without both moral and physical danger, resolved to take energetic steps to put an end to it. He commissioned several Israelites to propose a "good match" for Gertrude ; he promised for her an outfit such as respectable peasants were accustomed to receive, besides several hundred Gulden in money, and the lease of the inn at Alma.

"If Gertrude is once married," thought Mathis, "then Peter will soon cease to think of her, and will seek and readily find a wife, for he is a fine young fellow and my only heir ; and after a little time both he and Gertrude will laugh at their youthful folly."

But the good Mathis was mistaken. The first Israelite who presented himself as a suitor to Gertrude, was treated with so much indifference, and even open dislike, that he gladly withdrew his suit, and the only result was that Gertrude now appeared every morning, her eyes red with weeping, and Peter was so affected by her sadness that it was feared his health would suffer.

"But do tell me, my son," asked Mathis, "on what do you base your hopes."

"On nothing, father," was the painful reply ; "but so much is certain, that I will not marry, since Gertrude cannot be my wife ; and, if she weds another, I will shoot myself."

Mathis could not sleep a wink that night. He saw two persons, who were dear to him as life, loving and yet not daring to satisfy that love, and could he blame his boy ? Yet how to effect a result without giving pain to their young hearts, or, perhaps, see his son a corpse at his feet ?

His mind was soon made up.

On the following morning, he summoned Gertrude

and Peter, bade them to sit down together on a bench before him, and addressed them as follows :

"Listen to me, children, I am going to bring these matters to some conclusion. That you two can marry each other, each with a different religion, is entirely out of the question. As far as Gertrude is concerned, she can never become a Protestant ; she will never abandon her religion, and, besides, I promised her father, on his dying bed, that I would never tempt her from her faith. But you, Peter, who are familiar with Jewish customs, and have learnt to consider the God of the Jew as the God of the Protestant, can, without making any sacrifice, change your religion. I interpose no obstacle in your way. But here, where there exist so many prejudices, you can never live safely. Go to America, that land which offers an asylum to all, where you will be protected in your rights, and where you can enjoy your life in quiet and contentment. Go, and my blessing attend you. I will pay your expenses thither, and give you sufficient to establish yourself in some business. The moment you are married, send me a token, Take these *Tephilin* ; they belonged to Schlome, and may they accompany your first experience in your new religion. When you are in want of funds in your new business, or need assistance, send me these Tephilin, and I will transmit you whatever sum you may require."

Need I go further ? I have already related to you how I saw these *tephilin* brought to Mathis by the aged Israelite. The young couple were married with their father's blessing, and set sail for the land of freedom.

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In a few weeks, I was so far recovered that I was able to travel to Pesth, and there, under skillful surgical treatment, I was again restored to sound health.

About a year later, I ordered a horsebroker to purchase two horses for me. It was market day, and he drove me into town, to the horse mart. What was my surprise to find Mathis there ! He had four fine looking animals with him, two of which he offered for sale. He recognized me at once, and congratulated me on my being restored to health.

A price for his horses was soon agreed on, but I desired till the afternoon to try them, and then pay for them.

"Sir," said Mathis to me, "I am going farther. Though I am in want of money, I can wait yet awhile. At the end of three months, I shall send you my address, and, if the horses suit you, send me the money by post."

"How?" I exclaimed, "Do you not return to Alma?"

"No. I have just received news that I am a grandfather, and I can't stay here any longer. I am about selling out my stock at Ratany and Alma, as I must join my beloved children."

Three months later, I sent the price of the horses to New York, where Peter and his wife, child and father, were spending their days happily on a well-stocked and profitable farm.

THE RABBI'S DAUGHTER.

THE HARRIS MANUSCRIPTS

THE RABBI'S DAUGHTER.

A TALE OF POLAND.



CHAPTER I.

A POLISH RABBI.

The peace of Westphalia had just concluded a series of wars, through which Central and Western Europe were thrown into confusion and devastation. During eighty long years had the war raged in the Netherlands ; in thirty years, had it converted the blooming fields of fair Germany into barren wastes, impeded the onward march of art and science, and robbed populous cities of their inhabitants. After long and stormy assemblies at Munster and Osnabrueck, differences were stayed, and a treaty of peace was concluded. Eastern Europe, however, had comparatively not been affected by these long struggles. But it was reserved for the kingdom of Poland alone,—Poland where our coreligionists most especially dwell,—to suffer the most unspeakable anguish, to see terrible war waving its flaming torch, bearing to all death and destruction, misery and misfortune.

Being greatly wronged by a Polish prince, Horonzi, the leader of the Cossacks, Chamil, had revolted against his ruler, the king of Poland. Horonzi had previously imprisoned him, and desired to have him beheaded, but having succeeded in making good his escape, Chamil stirred up to rebellion the professors of the Grecian-Cath-

olic faith against the Roman-Catholic Poles. Finding his little force increasing day by day, until twenty thousand men marched under his banners, in order that he might make his success doubly sure, he joined with the Tartars, and soon faced the Polish army of six thousand, with a force ten times as great. The issue was not long uncertain. Her army being routed, the whole of Poland was exposed to invasion, while the inhabitants of every grade and stamp, (especially the Jews), were compelled to submit to the blind fury of their conquerors. We will not delineate the atrocious spectacles that must have met the gaze of the unhappy Poles. We need not enumerate the wretched victims, in vain laying down their very lives for the preservation of their homes and kindred, nor mention the ruined and desolated cities, or the dissolution of large congregations by war's fierce hand. Let us rather turn our attention from such terrible occurrences, and touch upon them only so far as they belong to the course of our narrative; entering upon matters of a quieter nature. Let us approach the wretched abode of one of the greatest men which Israel, so prolific in that particular, has produced.

In a little house in the Jewish quarter of the small Lithuanian city, Priusk, there lives Rabbi Sabbathai Cohen and his family. Following the Polish custom, Sabbathai married early. His wife, Miriam, is a great-grand-daughter of the celebrated Rabbi Moses Isserles, and is worthy of her distinguished ancestry, pious and virtuous as the ancient prophetess whose name she bears. Sabbathai's house can hardly be called the abode of high fortune.—Miriam is ill, their only child, Esther, is delicate and feeble. We see the Rabbi standing at his wife's bedside; little Esther is near, endeavoring to check her hot tears. The Rabbi holds the feverish hand of his sick wife, who has just awakened from a disturbed slumber.

"Dear husband," says she, "I fear I am about to leave you and our darling child. Do not check me; I must tell you something of importance. In my slumber, I dreamed of my grandfather, who bade me bid you 'farewell!' and speak to you words of comfort in regard to our dark future. For know, over you and our child, sad events are impending. Yet I will watch over you. I will

supplicate for you at the throne of the Almighty, and I will not rest until I have placed you under His protection."

She sinks back exhausted upon her bed. The Rabbi tries to offer her words of comfort and hope,—she smilingly listens to his attempts at consolation.

"Beloved," said she, "fortunate was I to be thy wife, but this boon was granted to me only for a brief time.—Farewell, beloved husband! Farewell, my sweet Esther! God protect you both!"

Her weary eyes close, her voice fails, the tender heart of an affectionate mother ceases to beat, the soul of a good woman is ascending to its Maker, and as the Rabbi, weeping, repeated the glorious confession of Judaism,—*Shemang Yisroel*, the dying woman's lips moved slowly, before they closed forever.

* * * * *

Weeks passed since this sad event. The Rabbi sought comfort by a more diligent study of the Law. Esther, thus encountering the first great sorrow of her life, became very ill; and, while she was lying on her bed of sickness, he, sitting by her side, studied the Talmud, endeavoring to elucidate a knotty point in one of its difficult chapters. Engaged in deep study, he did not hear a certain rumbling noise that was growing more and more distinct. At last, shouts of terror and cries of anguish aroused him, and he started from his seat. "Chamil is coming! The Cossacks! The Cossacks!" The Rabbi opened the window, and was terrified to find smoke rising from dwellings in the vicinity, to which the Cossacks had set fire. Hastily throwing on his cloak, and wrapping a blanket around his child, he took her in his arms and left his home, taking a direction contrary to that which the Cossacks had marked by their conflagrations and robberies.

It was Winter—and Friday afternoon. The Rabbi made his way through the heavy snow, hurrying to reach the forest before night-fall. Behind him rose the wild songs of the Cossacks, commingled with the painful shrieks of the unfortunate Poles. Alarm gave the Rabbi super-human power; and just as the sun was setting, he entered

the friendly forest, and placed his dear burden on the ground at the foot of a tree. Sabbath was drawing near—a sad Sabbath; but the pious Rabbi, alone in the wood, with a sick child, no friendly being near, still thanked God for having delivered him from the hands of the robbers. He said the Friday-evening prayers, and in his devotions he found some consolation. The night was not very cold, and the warm blanket shielded both himself and the child, whom he now held in his arms. Poor Esther was in a high fever, and moaned unceasingly. What could the Rabbi do? He could give her neither drink nor medicine, but he endeavored to cheer her by those little endearments which only a father and mother can employ. At last the child sank into a deep sleep—and woke no more; and at daybreak the Rabbi held a corpse in his arms.

Poor Rabbi! Mother and child dead, he was now alone in the world. His house and precious books, with whatever other property he possessed, had, in all likelihood, been destroyed by the invading Cossacks. For a time, despair overcame his better feelings; he threw himself by the body of his dead girl, and wished he might die with her. But it was Sabbath. O, sublime holiday of the Lord, what a strength thou hast! What an influence dost thou exercise over the passions, especially of the pious man! Despair fled from Rabbi Sabbathai's heart, for a feeling, as of divine rest, fell upon him, a resignation to the will of God, which knows of no complaint or hesitancy on the part of man.

"God has so ruled," said he, "His holy will be done!"

He then began his Sabbath devotions, recited the *Sidrah*, (portion of the Law,) and reflected upon the word of God.

Now, dear reader, do you not admire this remarkable man? Picture to yourself the misery into which he had fallen, the many hardships and misfortunes he was compelled to endure, alone, without shelter or nourishment, on a cold winter's day, and the corpse of his only child beside him—nevertheless, resigned to God's decree, he remembers that the presence of the Sabbath forbids him to indulge in undue lamentations over private woes. Thus Judaism elevates its true professors above earthly cares,

causes them to cease despairing, regain courage, and look freely and cheerfully, amid all their affliction, to the throne of God.

As Rabbi Sabbathai was about to recite the *Moosaph* prayers, he heard the sound of trumpets, the barking of dogs, and the treading of horses as they tramped through the snow.

"Alas! The Cossacks are coming here, too," he exclaimed, and he was forced to flee again, leaving the dead Esther behind him. He sought temporary protection in a cave, where he remained all day, thinking that, under the cover of night, he might leave the cave, and seek the spot on which he had left his child.

What was his astonishment and grief to find, on arriving at the well-remembered tree, that the body was not to be found! The moon showed traces of men and dogs, but the corpse had disappeared. Perhaps they had buried it in the snow: he examined every footstep but in vain.

"O, Esther, my Esther, where art thou? May I not even bury thy lifeless body?"

He had lost all, even the corpse of his child: his God and His law alone remained.

CHAPTER II.

SAVED FROM DEATH.

Rabbi Sabbathai was, however, mistaken in supposing that the Cossacks had stolen his child's body. A greater person than any in their ranks had deprived him unwittingly of the sad office of burying his dead daughter. It was the King of Poland who had but recently defeated the Cossacks in a closely contested fight. The Cossacks in their retreat had surprised and plundered the little city of Priusk; and while they were being hotly pursued by the Polish General, Ossolinski, the king and his suite were hunting in the forest. As the party rode in the vicinity of the tree, at whose foot the child was lying, the king noticed his favorite dog suddenly move from the path which they were all taking, spring into the thicket

near by, and then utter that peculiar cry which dogs always indulge in at the sight of a corpse. He sent some of his servants to the spot from which the cry proceeded. They speedily returned, and stated that there lay, at the foot of a neighboring tree, a pretty and delicate girl, who probably had died on her flight from the ill-fated town which the Cossacks had so ruthlessly destroyed. The king, whose curiosity was somewhat excited, approached the body himself, and was curiously struck with the child's beautiful appearance. He could scarcely believe that so lovely a child could really be dead.

"Parcinski," said he to his physician, who was one of his *suite*, "examine that child and see whether she be still alive. Use all your skill to resuscitate her. It is surely the daughter of some Lithuanian nobleman, who would be ever thankful to us were we to preserve his child's life."

Parcinski placed his hand on the child's bosom and was rejoiced to find that her heart still beat, although the pulsations followed each other but slowly. So he told the king that the child would in all probability recover, if she were properly cared for. One of the attendants, at the king's orders, took Esther in his arms, mounted his horse, and the party thereupon returned to the castle, which was being temporarily occupied by the royal family. Restoratives were quickly applied to the child, who, in a short time, awoke from her death-trance, but was doomed to lie abed for weeks, under the influence of a fever whose virulence daily threatened her life.

Little Princess Mary, the only child of the king and queen of Poland, was delighted with the idea of having so sweet a playmate living in the house with her, of the same age, and of so lovely appearance. She impatiently waited for the day when it would be allowed her to enter the sick chamber, and see, and caress, the little stranger.

There is a strange, magnetic attraction that binds the young together. Rank, wealth and religion, are no barriers in its way, but children will be drawn together and love each other despite those social usages and laws that separate their parents.

At last, Esther was convalescent. She could now be asked with safety respecting her family and former life,

and, as usual in such cases, her benefactors were not loth to be fully informed as to her name and history. She told them her simple story, how that her father was a good and pious rabbi, her mother a loving wife who had died, and left them alone in their little hut ; how that the cruel Cossacks entered their village, and drove her father and herself into the woods, where she was overcome by fatigue, and fell asleep at her father's feet. And this was all she knew until she awoke and found herself lying in this comfortable bed, with strange, but kind faces gazing at her.

"So, it is a little Jewess that I have saved," said the king. "What can I do with her? Who knows who her father is, or where he has fled?"

"May it please your majesty," advised Parcinski, "what I would urge is, that we deliver her to the Jewish community, who are charitable, and who will care for her."

"No, no! father," cried little Mary. "Don't take this little girl from me. How nicely will we play together as soon as she becomes perfectly well, and I will be so happy with her. Do let this girl of the wood be with me."

"Let us please our child, and keep the little waif as long as she gives pleasure to our daughter. We can christen her at once," observed the queen, which resulted in the desired permission being obtained, and the king's confessor was instructed to prepare Esther for baptism.

A few days after this, when Esther was perfectly restored, a little event occurred which raised quite a commotion in the castle. Up to this time, the child had patiently eaten whatever had been offered her by her attendant, but now she positively refused to eat meats and such articles of food as her rabbi-father had instructed her were forbidden to Israelites. The physician was told of the child's freak and he could not understand how one so young could be so obstinate.

"Why don't you eat, you little simpleton?" said he to little Esther.

"Because God forbade us to eat such food."

"But you never before refused to eat."

"Because," answered the girl, "until now I was sick. And I remember my father used to say, when my poor

mother was so unwell, that one's life must be preserved by eating any food ; but now, as I am well, I can eat only *Jewish* food."

The doctor said no more to Esther, but he left the room impressed with this idea, that it was high time that Father Cyril began his work of christianizing this little rebel.

A severe trial was now in store for our young Jewess which has overcome many an older and more experienced head than hers. The priest, Father Cyril, soon entered her room and proceeded to paint in the usual glowing colors, the simplicity and beauty of Christianity, the love its founder ever bore for children, especially strangers' children such as Esther. "Your father has left you," said the priest, "never to see him again. You are dead to him, but have been restored to new life by the grace of our sovereign, the king. You are therefore his creature, and must do as he bids. Now, our gracious king commands you to adopt his religion, and, therefore, my child, I have come to make you a Christian !"

But Esther made no reply, save that she cried and moaned, and wished she had died before they brought her to this house, where they were trying to make her forget her dear father and her holy religion, and she begged the Father to send her away to her own people.

It is no wonder that Esther so boldly withstood the advances of the priest. At this time, martyrdom among the Jews of Poland was of frequent occurrence. The Cossacks, whenever they took Jews captive, offered them the choice of two alternatives—either to be baptized, or to suffer an immediate death, and it is needless to add how that Jews and Jewesses, young and old, heroically died on the rack or at the stake, protesting till the end their belief in Israel's God. Every Jewish heart was filled with admiration for these martyrs, fathers depicted their sufferings in vivid colors to their sons and daughters, and so inflamed their ardor and kindled their enthusiasm for Judaism, that they would all have met death unflinchingly, rather than subscribe to the dominant faith. We need not be surprised, therefore, that one so young as Esther should have braved the fate which the cruel words of the priest seemed to portend. She refused

to listen to him any longer, but threw herself upon her bed and sobbed so bitterly that the Princess Mary, who was in a room near by, heard her cries, and hastened to soothe her.

"Little Esther, why do you cry? Who wishes to hurt you?"

Esther could not answer, but simply pointed to Cyril.

"Is it you, Father Cyril, who have hurt my Esther?" asked Mary wonderingly.

"Not so, my daughter," calmly replied the priest, "I wish to make her happy. She shall become thy sister, and a good young Christian besides."

"And don't you wish it, Esther?" Mary asked.

"No, no, no!" passionately cried little Esther, "I will never become a Christian. I will remain a Jewess, else I will die."

"Hush, dear Esther," said Mary soothingly, gently raising her and kissing her hot forehead, "He will not harm you. You shall be my own dear little sister. Come with me in the garden and see the newly blooming flowers."

Esther smiled amid her tears, took Mary's proffered hand, and the children laughingly passed into the garden.

But Father Cyril was spiritually troubled. He sought the king and related his adventure to him. This greatly vexed the king, who would have immediately dismissed Esther from the castle had it not been for the urgent remonstrance of his queen, who would not for the world have marred the peace of her darling Mary.

And Parcinski likewise interposed, urging that, through a systematic education, the child would soon be induced to adopt the Christian faith, that, in a few years, Esther would ask as a special favor to be admitted into the holy congregation.

So the king was satisfied, and he consented to retain Esther as the inmate of his house and the playmate of his child. And thus the young princess and the unconverted Jewess were companions and friends for years.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE IN THE PALACE.

On the return of the court to Cracow, the Polish capital, Esther accompanying the royal party, the queen determined that her child's playmate should not be deprived of the food such as she knew her heart must hunger after. So every day, a poor Jewish widow, known in the city as old Hannah, called at the palace with a basketful of meats and vegetables, such as the little Jewess could eat without compunction. Of course, the Jews of Cracow soon learned from Hannah the strange fact that there was a young girl of their race living at the palace, and their curiosity was rather excited as to who she was and how she fell into such noble company. Old Hannah had frequent talks with her, but she discovered nothing that could give any clue as to who her father was, save that he was a learned man, who had fled with many others from Priusk, doubtless to meet death from the Cossacks, or from what was hardly worse, starvation.

Esther rapidly grew in bodily strength; her beauty was the subject of general praise. Mary, too, was growing prettier daily, but hers was a more fragile and fairer beauty. The two friends improved in their studies, the mind of Esther, descended as she was from so illustrious a line of *savans*, expanded more freely than Mary's, who acknowledged without any regret, that Esther, in her childish words, knew more than she did.

A little incident now occurred which seemed to change the relations between Esther and the household. One day, when the governess and children were in the garden, Father Cyril approached the group, and he and the governess left the friends together while they promenaded the garden in close converse. Mary and Esther sat down on a bench in the garden corner, and were soon engaged in the pleasant pastime of making wreaths out of the flowers and evergreens that grew in profusion around. Suddenly, Esther sprang up with a loud shriek. The governess and priest hurriedly ran to learn its cause.

Around the neck of the unsuspecting princess, a poisonous viper was slowly encircling itself. The priest quickly seized it and flung it to the ground. The governess, on perceiving the danger from which her princess had just escaped, fainted. Esther wept with tears of joy, but felt supremely happy when little Mary embraced her, kissed her again and again, and said she would never forget her dear friend who had saved her. The little scene attracted the king and queen and several of their retinue, who were also walking about the palace grounds. Esther was quickly hailed as a heroine. The kind queen wept with emotion, calling her her dear daughter, for whose future happiness she would not fail to provide. The king, no less affected, kissed her on the forehead—and Esther at once became a general favorite.

Was it for her welfare?

* * * * *

The years rolled on. As the physician had predicted, Esther's feelings underwent great changes. Her childhood and its exciting scenes, were almost effaced from her memory. Old Hannah, who still supplied her food, could give her no instruction in Judaism. She read her prayers regularly from the Hebrew prayer-book which the widow had years ago procured for her. But the Hebrew, and the mixed Jewish-German dialect in which some other devotional works in her possession were written,—were alike unintelligible to her. She had forgotten the language in which she and her father could converse in olden times. Gradually she became attracted to the scenes and faces around her. The family prayers—for the king was strict in religious matters—the pretty church which they all attended, the priest Cyril who had so kind a word for everybody, all these circumstances drew her farther and farther from the Jewish associations which she had so long cherished. A few years ago, no one was friendly with her, excepting Mary. She felt isolated,—and longed to see her lost father. In sadness she thought of her dead mother—and wished herself far away from the splendor of the palace, preferring the humble hut in which she had passed her happy childhood. But now,

since she had become the court favorite, she no longer yearned to be away. Now she was as a princess herself. The servants ran to do her bidding. She was treated as a daughter by both king and queen, and to all appearances Mary and she were as devoted sisters. She no longer thought of the past, but occasionally beheld the future with terror.

What would become of her, were she to persist in her ancestral belief?

A poor decrepit Jewess is passing the palace gates, worn down under the load of a bundle of old clothes. Will that be her fate?

The two girls were now in their fifteenth year. Mary was soon to be betrothed to a young and amiable prince. Her prospects were indeed bright. Before her betrothal, it was necessary by the law of the kingdom that she should receive confirmation and become more marked in her adherence to her faith. To give her final instruction in the doctrines of Christianity, a young, comely and ingenuous priest was selected. He spoke long and earnestly with her, in Esther's presence, of the beauties and promises of Christianity, of the divine attributes and tragic sufferings of its founder. Eloquently and impressively, he pictured to the young girls the blessings which this religion of love would confer upon its professors. Mary was deeply affected by his discourse ; and, on his departure, she burst into tears.

"O, Esther," she cried, "be my sister in truth—my sister in faith. Be altogether mine!"

Esther gently unbound the arms which were in fondness clasping her neck, and sorrowfully left the room. Her heart was full. She must be alone. She sought a retired spot in the garden, and there, covering her face with her hands, she cried bitterly.

Suddenly, her sobs ceased. A vision, as it were, appeared before her, and she saw, as in a dream, her pale, sick mother fondly beckoning to her. Her father, with the Talmud open before him, was regarding her with a look of tenderness.

"My dear father, my poor dead mother! Shall I be

separated from you? Shall I forget you—" and a flood of tears again choked her utterance.

Two gentle arms embraced her, a rosy mouth kissed away her tears, and Mary, who had followed her in the garden, said :

"Esther, dear, do not weep. I would not for the world cause you pain. You are, and will always be, my sweet sister, even if you will not become a Christian. But, dear sister, if you only would consent to adopt our faith, it would be so much for your good. My father would at once grant you a dowry, and then you would marry some noble, and thus we could always be together. But, if you will remain a Jewess, what is to become of you?"

And Esther simply answered, "O Mary, I can never leave you!"

"Then you will become a Christian?" Mary joyously cried.

But Esther could not reply.

CHAPTER IV.

CHANGE OF FORTUNE.

One summer afternoon, Mary, Esther and their governess, were driving together in the king's carriage. The day being pleasant, they were driven at a rapid rate in the outskirts of the city and neared the forest. The fiery steeds dashed along, the driver giving them full rein, and the occupants of the carriage were considerably exhilarated, chatting together gaily when, suddenly, the axle broke and the carriage was dashed to the ground. Happily no one was hurt, although they were all stunned by the shock.

A storm was approaching. The sky was rapidly becoming encircled by heavy clouds, and the blinding dust and wind were forerunners of a heavy rain. It was with delight that they discovered an inn near by, which they at once entered to seek temporary shelter. The horses, detached from the *debris* of the carriage, were likewise stabled in the welcome inn.

At this time, in Poland, all the tavern-keepers were Jews. It was only recently that there were but two

classes in Poland, noblemen and serfs, the Jews being a "middle" class, tradesman and mechanics, and especially inn-keepers.

The inn-keeper of the inn in which the royal party had taken refuge, was, of course, delighted with his guests. He sent his son at once to Cracow, to inform the family of the accident which had happened to the carriage, and to state that it was so near sundown, that the party would remain in the inn over night.

In the meantime the storm broke. For rain came down in torrents, vivid flashes of lightning pierced the gloom which had settled around, and loud peals of thunder startled the travelers, especially the volatile governess who, like all her class, was superstitious and timid in the presence of God's "instruments of wrath." Mary occupied herself with quieting the governess' fears, while Esther descended into the little parlor of the inn, which had now assumed a festive appearance, it being Friday night, the host and his family being dressed in their holiday clothes, lighted candles adorning the mantel, and a massive Sabbath-lamp occupying the centre of a substantially decorated table.

To Esther's imagination, she was in a Heavenly abode. Her past life rushed before her vision as in a dream. *Her father, her mother, and a young child, in which she recognized herself,* were partaking of their rustic meal. And this was the Holy Sabbath eve.

Esther was standing timidly by the door. She feared to disturb the family, as they were saying their Sabbath prayers. At last, the children rose to receive their father's blessing. Esther's heart beat fast within her.

"Bless me too, father," cried she appealingly. The family saw the strange young lady among them and were somewhat astonished.

"O, father, for the love of God, give me a blessing. I am a Jewess, without father or mother, and I am dying for some one of my faith to speak to me words of comfort."

The host was deeply affected. He had half suspected that the dark, Jewish-looking girl with the princess was that heroine of whom almost all Poland had heard, and now he had found that his suspicions were correct.

"Don't weep, my dear young lady. Thank God, you are safe from the storm and are now with us. We shall spend a pleasant Sabbath together"—and placing his hands on Esther's bowed head, he said solemnly :—

"My daughter, may God make thee like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah! May He guard thee from all evil!"

"Amen," added Esther in a low but firm voice, and she resolved from this moment never to yield to the winning words of her associates, but to be ever faithful to her God and His true faith.

The next morning, Mary and the governess returned to the palace, but Esther remained at the inn all day, and made good use of the few hours in which she was in the company of the worthy host and his family, listening with eagerness to the religious truths which the good inn-keeper unfolded before her, and obtaining knowledge respecting such subjects as had troubled her untutored heart. And, early on Sunday, a royal escort accompanied her back to Cracow.

It was night in the palace. All had retired. Esther's room connected with the apartment which princess Mary and the governess occupied. These two were in sound slumber, but Esther could not sleep. During the day, which was about two months after the Sabbath that she had spent at the inn, the king and queen had both spoken to her in regard to Mary's confirmation, and had told her that they would all be so happy if she would but consent to become a Christian. She had not answered them, but, sobbing, had asked them both to give her further time for reflection. Mary, too, had urged her conversion, and the young priest had argued with her in the afternoon. What could she do to remain true to her faith? But one path seemed open to her, and that was to escape, to run away from the friends she had known and loved so many years, but who now were endangering her soul's happiness. She must escape. But how?

There was a loud knock at the door of the adjoining room. Mary awoke in affright, and called the governess.

"Awake, awake! The palace is on fire!" They were terrified.

"Open the door. Save yourselves!"

Hurriedly throwing on their shawls, they opened the door and rushed out.

Esther stood as if inspired.

"At last, I can free myself!" she cried.

She rushed to the window and opened it. The palace was all ablaze. The air was thick with smoke which was already filling Mary's room.

"Now can I escape unnoticed. If they miss me, they will believe I perished in the flames, and they will no more persecute me."

The fiery brightness of the burning palace illumined all around. In front of the window, there stood a tree whose branches she could readily grasp. And just as Mary and Esther had often, by means of these branches, swung themselves from the room to the garden, so did Esther now. She reached the ground in safety. At one end of the garden was a little gate which led to the highway. She could thus easily reach a neighboring village and there conceal herself with some Israelite family until a favorable opportunity could be presented whereby she might leave for a foreign country, where her knowledge of the languages and of music, would be of advantage to her towards obtaining a livelihood, and thus remain faithful to the belief of her fathers.

These thoughts occupied her as she ran to the gate. Should this be closed, she would be compelled to return. She presses the latch—it yields to her touch; the gate opens, and Esther stands in the open street, free at last.

Out into the gloomy night, out upon the lonely road, Esther walked rapidly. The burning palace shed a fearful light over her path, and she hurried on, hardly knowing whither to go, but inwardly oppressed with fear lest wolves or robbers should attack her, or lest her strength should give way, and she should, weary and footsore, sink to the ground—as years before she had fainted in her father's arms, when the Cossacks drove them from their native city.

The palace was doomed. All human exertions had failed to check the devouring element, and the affrighted people expected to see the walls totter, and the once shapely palace become a mass of blackened ruins.

"I am only glad," said the king, "that no human life has been lost."

Mary looked anxiously around.

"Where is Esther?" she cried, in alarm.

They looked for the missing girl, calling her name loudly; but to no purpose. The governess was certain she had left her room with them, and was now in the garden; but no Esther could be found. Mary wept bitterly. The king ordered some of the servants to search Esther's room, but it was no longer possible to enter it, for the tree in front of the window could no more be ascended; it was already in flames. And now it was certain that the girl was lost: the only being in the palace whom the flames had seized as their living prey.

The queen fondly embraced her child, rejoicing that she had been preserved; but the poor princess cried sadly after her lost friend, and would not be comforted.

CHAPTER V.

AMONG THE ROBBERS.

When Rabbi Sabbathai returned to the spot where, as he supposed, his dead child lay, and discovered to his grief that the body was removed, he gave vent to bitter lamentations. He ran through the woods, frantically calling her name, and praying to God that he might once more see his beloved child. He retraced his steps to Priusk, but found the city a mass of ruins. His grief gradually subsided, and his strong religious feelings soon reconciled him to his loss; but he never forgot his child. He wandered through Lithuania and Poland. Wherever he mentioned his name, he was received with distinguished favor, for the Rabbi was widely known as a man of great talents, profound learning, and a true religious disposition. Every congregation he visited desired to have him as their teacher and guide, but he declined all

offers. It was his Esther he was in search of, not pecuniary happiness,—for, by a certain strange presentiment, he fancied he should some day or other see his child alive and well.

At last, he yielded to the repeated solicitations of the Jewish congregation at Hollischau, in Moravia, and became their Rabbi. He repaired to that city, and soon became endeared to the community, whom his accession benefited, as their previous guide had not fulfilled his sacred trust in a manner that contributed to the welfare of his flock. But Esther was still in the Rabbi's thoughts ; and, although after a few years' residence in Hollischau, he married an estimable Jewess, and was blessed with a son that inherited his goodness of heart, he often reverted to the sad night of his bereavement, and prayed God to grant him a speedy reunion with his lost daughter.

One day, a poor Polish Jew, whom he had invited to dine with him, chanced to relate at the table the singular incident that was the talk all over Poland—how that a little Jewess found by the king, in the woods, was now an inmate of his palace, treated like a princess, and yet refused to eat at the royal table.

The next morning, the Rabbi started for Cracow, hoping that this Jewess might be his lost child. On reaching Cracow, he learned that the court had left the capital for Lithuania. Of course, the Rabbi followed, bent upon this one object, to see his daughter—if only the favored being, now the guest of the king of Poland, could be his daughter.

The Rabbi proceeded slowly on his journey. Although well acquainted with the road, his mind was so wholly occupied with varied thoughts respecting his daughter, his mission on her behalf, and the loved ones he had left awaiting him in Hollischau, that he did not perceive that he was entering a thick wood, which, report said, was infested by robbers. The sun had set, and the Rabbi failed to see the wood closing around him, making it impossible for him to retrace his steps, or even to walk on much farther. At last he awoke to a sense of his position as a traveller who had lost his way, and with his returning consciousness came the recollection that this was a wood beset with dangers. Strange stories had reached his ears

of dreadful depredations and horrible assassinations committed ; of travelers who had left their homes in the afternoon in full hope and spirits, being found dead the following morning. He was by no means a timid man : he had seen trouble enough in reality to start like a child when hearing old nursery tales of horror ; but instinctively his heart gave a sudden bound, and he wished he had never made the journey.

A light glimmered in the distance. He followed it, and his terrified gaze beheld a band of fierce, blood-thirsty men, gathered around a table in a large cave, in which the flickering light of a rude lamp but added to the gloom. "These must be robbers," was his natural thought, and he quickly retraced his steps, as if to retreat from the threatening danger. But the trained hearing of the men detected his hurried tread. They soon ran out after him.

"What do you wish here, Jew?"

Answered the poor Rabbi, "I am a harmless traveler. Having lost my way in the wood, I followed a light which I saw glimmering through the foliage, and thus—but I am truly sorry if I disturbed you."

"Not so," cried one of the robbers. "You are a spy. You were in search of us, and discovered our hiding place. But it was a sad day for you that tempted you to start out in quest of our band. You shall die—and very soon."

In vain did the Rabbi attempt to reason with the men, to convince them that he was a preacher, and had no intention of seeking their place of concealment and now, having discovered it, of betraying them to the authorities. They would not be convinced : they had decided that he was a spy, and, of course, he must be such. His arms were tightly bound behind him, his scanty purse was emptied of its contents, and he lay at the mercy of his captors. His doom was apparently sealed, for the robber who had before called him a spy, now raised his axe aloft and was about to bury it in the neck of the unoffending Sabbathai, when another robber cried :

"Hold, Wenzislaw! You dare not kill him yet. You know our captain is strict in his enforcement of this law of his, that he is the head and judge of our band, and it

is for him to condemn or acquit, and no one else. So drop your axe, and take the man to our cave until the captain arrives."

The fellow yielded to the advice of his less impatient companion, and the men carried the Rabbi into the cave, placing him in its extreme end, and resumed their cards and cups, from which Sabbathai's luckless coming had disturbed them.

Sabbathai was perfectly resigned to his fate. Pious man that he was, he spent the few moments of grace left him by reason of the absence of the robber-captain, in prayer.

At last, the barking of a dog broke upon the stillness of the night.

"Good! here's the captain," cried the robbers, and, as they spoke, a tall, athletic and fine looking man entered the cave, followed by his boon companion, a huge mastiff. The "captain," as the robbers called him, was attired like a Lithuanian nobleman.

"Well, my lads. What day have you had?"

"Bah! nothing at all, save an old Jew and a couple of guilders," said Wenzislaw, who appeared the boldest of the lot. "But you, captain, what fortune have you had?"

"Not much. I captured a young woman, however, whose ransom will be rather considerable. She will be here shortly, under charge of Willusch."

Suddenly, the robbers were startled by hearing a voice call out from the rear of the cave, "Ratislaw!"

"Who dares call that name here?" angrily demanded the captain. "Whom have you here, Wenzislaw?"

"Oh, that is the old Jew we caught spying out our cave. I'll quiet him. I wished to put an end to his villainous life before, only good Jenka did not like to see him hurried out of existence. Curse the Jews."

The captain trembled.

"O, Ratislaw, save me, save me! Think of the time when I rescued you from danger."

Without a word the robber rushed to the spot from whence the voice proceeded, unbound the captive, and assisted him to a seat by the table.

"Can it be you, my Sabbathai—my old friend?"

He kissed the Rabbi's hand, and, with a voice broken

with emotion, said: "Sabbathai, Sabbathai, you are the only one who ever pitied me in those troubles of my life, which have driven me to the career I now lead."

Years ago, before Sabbathai had entered upon the duties of a Rabbi's office, he had been a well-to-do merchant in Leipsic, and there he had met Ratislaw, the playmate of his youth, the son of a proud Lithuanian nobleman. Ratislaw was extravagant, and speedily became involved in large debts. With a generosity that the naturally sensitive heart of Ratislaw could well appreciate, the Jewish merchant paid his debts, and the young nobleman left the country. He met with many a change of fortune, became reckless, and at last joined a small band of robbers who, in admiration of his personal accomplishments and daring bravery, elected him their captain. His name and early history were unknown to them, which will explain his anger at hearing some stranger call him by a name which he had not heard for years. On recognizing, in his captive, his playmate and generous friend, he was deeply affected. He briefly rehearsed the events of his life since his residence in Leipsic, how that misfortune had befallen him, and at last he had resigned all hope of leading a life like the rest of mankind, but had become a bandit, trusting that amid the excitement of such a career he might forget what he was and what he might have been.

With the eloquence of which he was so capable, Sabbathai pictured to the bandit the grand error into which he—as with other misguided men—had fallen. He reminded him of his early life and long friendship, of their companions and the happy scenes of their youth; and then he sternly pointed to the numberless crimes that had forever stained his life and disgraced the noble name he bore. Overcome by the Rabbi's words, the captain lost all control of his feelings, but covered his face with his hands, and wept bitterly.

The robbers could not understand why their bold chief should thus disgrace his calling as to weep tears of penitence.

"Are you an old woman, captain, or a coward to be

thus talked over by a Jew? Remember the oath you and we have sworn."

"Are you to remind me of our oath, Wenzislaw?" cried the captain, rising in a sudden passion. "Silence, I command you, or I'll run my dagger through your insolent body."

"Captain," said Jenka, firmly. "I have always been obedient and faithful to you. Three times have I saved your life. Don't be a child, then, but send this babbling Jew away. You know you dare not leave us, and his being here will but give us unnecessary trouble, and you a deal of anxiety."

"You are right, good Jenka. It must be so," said Ratislaw, in a sorrowful tone. "Sabbathai, friend of my youth, I am chained here, and must with these men continue a life from which now I turn with a dread I never before experienced. Go, then. Leave us. And when you have heard that Fate has at last taken captive the chief of this robber-band, then utter a prayer in my behalf. Pray for me to the Almighty, who avenges wrongdoing, but is also gracious and merciful. Here, Sabbathai, is the money my men took from you, and now, farewell!—Jenka, conduct the Rabbi as far as the highway, and see that he meets with no harm."

And thus the Rabbi parted with the robbers; arriving the following morning at a neighboring village, where he found a hospitable Israelite, at whose house he stayed until he felt sufficiently refreshed to proceed on his homeward journey. On arriving at Hollischau, the sad report reached him of the burning of the palace, at which the only human being sacrificed was the young Jewess, whom he had before fondly hoped was his Esther. This last blow, combined with the excitement he underwent at the robbers' cave, prostrated him, and for weeks he lay on his bed, so sick that his life was despaired of.

Strange fatality! The Rabbi was rejoiced to leave the cave of the robbers, and fervently thanked God for his escape. Had he remained one short hour more, he would have found his long looked-for daughter.

And Esther, did she know, as she was led terrified into the cave, that, but a brief hour before, her own dear father was its inmate?

For the woman of whose capture Ratislaw had informed his band, was no less a being than Esther, the rabbi's daughter.

Ratislaw had met Esther while she was wearily walking her lonely way, the day after that disastrous fire that so suddenly separated her from the good royal family, which had grown so hateful to her, since they had begun again to worry her about her religious belief. The robber asked her who she was, but she simply answered that she was a poor orphan who had run away from cruel relatives. Their names she would not give, although Ratislaw asked her frequently about them, because he surmised the girl would bring him a handsome ransom. He thought her obstinate silence would not last long—the cave and its disagreeable inmates would soon make her communicative—and sure of a large ransom, he placed her in charge of Willusch and rode on in advance, in the manner we have above described.

When Esther shortly afterwards entered the cave and sat down on the seat which her father had so recently occupied, she was surprised at the dejected appearance of the captain, who had undergone, since last she met him, so great a change. He sat by the table, his listless appearance betraying the bitter reflections that the Rabbi's words had raised within him. He did not speak for some time, and it was only when Willusch touched his shoulder, and told him that the girl he had met in the woods was in his presence, and he wished to know what should be done with her, that he became himself again.

"Come here, girl," said he, abruptly. Her beauty seemed to have excited his admiration, for he gazed on her for some time before adding,

"Answer truly the questions I will ask you."

Esther trembled, and a flush of crimson dyed her face and neck, as she noticed the ardent look of the dread robber.

"Your name, child?"

"My name, sir, is Esther."

"Who was your father?"

"A Jewish rabbi."

"A rabbi's daughter? How can that be when your rich dress betokens that you are of a noble family. Speak the truth."

"It is true, sir, I am a rabbi's daughter," answered Esther calmly, "but the relatives with whom I have been living for many years are rich and powerful. They wished me to abjure my faith. This I could not do, so I fled from them."

"Who are these relatives? Where do they live?"

"I will not tell you. I will never return to them."

"Not tell me? Girl, are you not aware that I have the power to make you tell everything I ask? I am a robber chief, and hate mankind. I can force you to speak, and what resistance can a girl like you offer?"

"I can die," she firmly replied. "I am a Jewess; and many girls, young as I am, have died for their religion."

The brave girl daunted Ratislaw somewhat by her reply. He merely answered, "Do not speak in that way, Miss Esther. We kill here for money and not for religion."

The robber Jenka now approached Ratislaw, and said to him quietly, 'Captain, why not keep the girl here for yourself. She will make your evenings agreeable to you, after your days of hard labor. We are all lonely men here. It will be an excellent idea to have so young and handsome a girl as this Jewess to keep us company. I am your trusty servant, and I will see that no one of us will harm her. She shall be kept for you alone.'

This suggestion seemed to please Ratislaw, who at once drew nearer to Esther, and in a gentle voice said to her, "My child, how would you like to live with us forever?"

She shrank from him in alarm.

"Do not be frightened, my dear. I wish you to love me, not to be terrified at my words. You shall be my wife—my queen. A hundred brave men will attend you to do your every bidding. You shall have as much gold and jewelry as your heart may desire, and we shall transform this rude cave into a home of delight, where Love and Joy shall reign supreme!"

His cruel words struck a strange terror to the heart of the innocent girl. She fell on her knees before him, and

sobbed, "Kill me at once, but do not, I pray you, force me to any wrong!"

"Do not mind her, captain," said the robbers. "You will not have the like chance again. There's no finer girl in Poland."

Esther stood erect. She raised her hand aloft, and said in a firm voice :

"Chief of a murderous band! There is an Almighty God above us, who sees all that is being done here this day. He is the Avenger of evil deeds, but He is also merciful and compassionate. Be merciful unto me, if you wish Him to have mercy for you!"

"Girl," said Ratislaw, in a loud tone, "who has put these words into your mouth? Not an hour ago, did I hear them spoken by a friend of my youth. For his sake I will spare you. I will send you to Wilna, and shall there expect a ransom from the Jews. But you are safe while here. Listen, men, whoever does to her the least harm, will die by my hand!"

He gently bade her "good night!" and told Willush to prepare a resting-place for her in an adjoining room. He accompanied Esther to the door, and gave her the key, bidding her lock it from within. She thanked him earnestly for his kindness, but he hastily left her, saying to himself, as he lay down on his rough bed that night, "O, Sabbathai, even you will be pleased with me when you learn what I have done this day for a daughter of your people!"

* * * * *

Early the next morning Jenka left the cave with a letter from Ratislaw addressed to the Jews of Wilna, and containing this proposition, that, on the payment of 3000 florins, he would deliver to the Jewish community a young Jewess whom he held captive.

The letter was delivered to the Chief Rabbi, who, on reading it, immediately convened a meeting of the principal Israelites of Wilna, and laid the unusual message before them. Quite a lengthy discussion arose among them, the wealthy men declining to spend so large a sum on a subject about which they knew nothing, as Ratislaw,

ignorant himself in the matter, could not state who or what her family was, or whither she was going when he had taken her captive.

At last, a young but learned and respected Rabbi, named Menachem, offered to pay the entire sum himself, since the community seemed unwilling to release a sister Israelite from captivity. Of course his offer was accepted, and Menachem accompanied Jenka to a spot midway between Wilna and the robbers' cave, where Ratislaw and Esther met them. The money was promptly paid, and Esther, on being presented to her generous benefactor, thanked God for His kindness, in raising for her so good a deliverer. Tearfully she expressed her gratitude to Menachem, and begged him to make her his slave—anything, rather than send her back to the robbers, or, what she feared worse, the King of Poland and his court.

Rabbi Menachem spoke tenderly to her, assuring her that she would find friends in Wilna who would care for and protect her. The grief of the lonely girl, for heartfelt gratitude to him for rescuing her, and her child-like terror lest it was all a dream, and she would soon wake to see the terrible robbers glaring at her, strangely affected him, and he was heartily glad when he arrived at the door of his comfortable home in Wilna, and there introduced the trembling girl to his sister, with whom he had been living since their parents died, a few years before.

"Don't weep, my child!" she gently said. "You are at home, now, with kind friends, whose constant care will be to give you every comfort. You shall be my younger sister, and many will be the joyous hours which we shall spend together. I never had a sister, although good Menachem has been both sister and brother to me." And, imprinting a soft kiss upon the unresisting cheek of the fair girl, she led her to her own neat room, which they were to occupy together.

"Dear lady!" cried Esther, "do not send me away. I will be so glad to assist you in any way. May I be your sister always, to love you and thank you for your goodness? I lost my poor, dear mother, when I was a little child, and my father was dead to me soon after, and

yours is the first kind, loving face I have seen since. Oh, lady, I cannot believe this is real! It is too much happiness to be true! Kiss me again, to assure me that I am not dreaming, but that I am at last with good, kind friends, who will shelter me from harm!"

And Yetta wound her arms around Esther's neck and kissed her tenderly, smoothing her disordered locks, and smilingly bidding her to prepare for supper; for Menachem was ravenously hungry, having eaten nothing since the morning,—but being also eager to see his Esther, whom he had adopted that happy day as his younger sister.

Under the kind care of her friends Esther soon forgot her sufferings, and recovered her cheerful spirits. As she ripened into womanhood, the charms of her well-stored mind were displayed, and Yetta and Menachem rejoiced at the gift God had sent them. Menachem had loved Esther from the first time he saw her, but he at first supposed it was pity for her forlorn condition that caused him to regard her with a tenderness to which he had hitherto been a stranger. To one of Esther's loving and impulsive nature, so good and kind a benefactor and friend as the learned Rabbi Menachem, would not long remain without inspiring her with a feeling above mere gratitude and sisterly affection, so that it created no surprise in Wilna when the report became general that the good rabbi had asked the lovely Esther to be his bride.

And just one year after her rescue from the robber's cave, Esther became the happy wife of Wilna's gifted son, Rabbi Menachem. Blessed with a devoted husband, a gentle and never-failing adviser in her sister-in-law, Yetta, and beloved by a host of friends, Esther was still, at times, unhappy. There was one fond desire that was to be satisfied, and then she would be perfectly contented.

"Ah, my dear Menachem!" the young wife would say, "I am indeed grateful to God for the blessings He has granted me, but could He bestow on me but one more boon; could He but restore to me my dear lost father, then I could cry, 'Enough, O God! I am too blessed. Incline thine ear to the supplications of those of thy creatures who are less fortunately conditioned than I!'"

But can that father be found? Is the weary, bereaved man yet alive? or has he succumbed to his many misfortunes and disappointments, and has left this world to join his dearly beloved wife in the regions above?

CHAPTER VI.

RE-UNITED.

Wilna was in sore trouble. Prince Paul Radzivil, who was supreme ruler in Lithuania, had just returned to the city from a foreign tour, which he had undertaken with his young bride. His purse was somewhat empty by reason of a late war with the Swedes, which had made great inroads in the treasury.

At that time, whenever a monarch or government was in need of pecuniary supplies, caused by extravagance, pestilence, or a war of heavy proportions, there was generally one source from which to be reimbursed, which never failed them—the Jews. Whether in England, France, Germany, or little Poland, it was the same. The Jews were supposed to possess the wealth of nations, and perforce they must resign their unfortunate gains, and patriotically support the kind and liberal governments, under whose beneficent rule they were privileged to dwell. Occasionally, one or two rich Jews would serve as scapegoats for their brethren. The king would levy on their jewelry and money, so that it often happened that the rich Jewish banker of to-night was in the morning as poor as the beggar on whom yesterday he had bestowed alms,—and poorer, for he had the recollection, the harrowing remembrance, of riches forever lost, to be ever before him, and clog his future efforts, while the beggar's thought was simply as to whom he will next apply to for aid.

It was no unusual thing, therefore, for the happy family of banker Metz, to be awakened at dead of night by a rude and imperious knocking at their doors, an immediate entrance demanded, or forced, “in the name of his blessed Majesty,” and the trembling Metz commanded, under pain of death, to unlock his coffers, and calmly

transfer their contents to the tender hands of the law's myrmidons.

At other times, congregations and communities would be taxed a heavy amount, with the choice of either paying by a stated period, or of expulsion from their homes, and an involuntary exile into whatever country would deign to give them shelter.

So at Wilna. The Prince's proclamation stated to the bewildered inhabitants, that "Whereas, it was necessary for the well-being of our beloved country, that one hundred thousand ducats should be in her treasury by March 1st; therefore, it is required of the Jews of Wilna that they produce that sum at the palace on or before that period, otherwise the Prince will take such measures against the Jews as his judgment may dictate."

One hundred thousand ducats! Such was the figure; no more, no less. And the Jews alone were called upon to pay for a war which had been waged in behalf of the common weal. The Prince was remonstrated with by the dignitaries of the town, who urged that the Jews were ever a law-abiding people, a credit to the city, in charities unbounded, in politics patriotic equally with themselves and the other good Christians of the town,—but Paul would listen to no argument. He had issued his proclamation, and he would abide by it. The ladies of the Jewish community waited on the princess, who received them kindly, but unequivocally stated that she was powerless in the matter, as her husband had strictly forbidden her to interfere.

What were the Jews to do? They were in truth not a rich community. They were wholly unable to raise the required sum, and the prince was inexorable in his determination to take no less, and give no extension of time.

What could they do?

All the temporal authorities had been appealed to, without success. There was then but one course left, in the wisdom of the rabbis—to appeal to Heaven. This the people did with a will. The synagogues were never attended by a more numerous or a more devout audience. The rabbis appointed several days to be devoted wholly to fasting and praying, and the troubled Jews did as their rabbinical advisers recommended.

In Rabbi Menachem's house there was, of course, great affliction. It was the wealthier class that would suffer in the matter. He knew this, and he was sorely perplexed as to how to act. He had just been telling his wife of the fruitless interview of some ladies of the city with the princess, when Esther, as if by a strange instinct, inquired who the princess was, her name and family.

"Why, have you not heard? She is the Princess Mary, the only daughter of our king!"

Esther was somewhat astonished at this. She could not believe that *her* Mary, her old playmate, was the wife of the oppressor. At the same time, the news gave her strong hopes that she might yet be instrumental in averting the evil decree.

"I will visit the princess to-day, Menachem," she calmly said to her husband.

"And what good will that do?" asked the rabbi.

Menachem also became somewhat hopeful when his wife related to him her former connection with Mary, her life at the palace, and her escape therefrom. Menachem now knew for the first time what a heroine his pretty wife was.

"Oh, Esther, can it be that I have for my wife that famous heroine, whose name is known far and wide—the king's adopted daughter, a princess by right if not by blood, but a valiant Jewess who, for the sake of her belief, withstood temptations such as beset no other daughter of Israel? How, O God, have I deserved this blessing?"

He had loved his wife before—now he worshipped her.

"Go, with God's blessing," he said. "May the Lord look with favor on your undertaking!"

And, as Esther rode through the palace-gate, how quickly did her heart beat! She would be in a moment in the presence of her old friend, as a being risen from the dead!

In the sumptuous drawing-room of Prince Paul's mansion, the young Princess Radzivil was engaged in writing a letter to her parents, depicting in glowing terms the

charms of her wedded life, the love and constancy of her husband, her joy and contentment. Just as she was concluding her letter, a servant entered the room, stating that there was a Jewess in the hall who begged an audience with her highness.

"Alas, it is the old story!" said Mary. "Some other poor woman has entered my house to worry me with a subject about which I am powerless. Tell this Jewess, Cathinka, I cannot receive her."

The maid departed, but soon returned. "Your highness, this woman will not go. She says she has no favor to beg of you, but would simply impart to you a matter of great importance."

"Let her enter."

As Esther, closely veiled, entered the room and beheld her old companion sitting before her, looking so gentle and charming, she could not avoid giving vent to tears of joy.

"You are weeping, good lady," the princess said mildly. "I am indeed sorry I cannot assist you. The prince has strictly forbidden me to interfere."

Esther answered in a low voice, "I did not wish to speak of that sad affair, your highness. I would only give you some information, which I believe will interest you."

"Well?"

"Your highness once had a companion, who was supposed to have perished in the flames of the burning palace."

"Is she, then, alive?—Oh, speak, madam, and assure me that my Esther did not perish."

Esther could no longer restrain herself. She threw off her veil, fell on her knees, seized the princess's hand and covered it with hot kisses. "O, Mary, Mary, do you not know me? I am the lost Esther!"

Mary had recognized her well-known features as soon as her veil had been removed. Her joy at meeting her old playmate was unbounded. She embraced her again and again, and as soon as her composure had been sufficiently restored, she begged Esther to relate to her the story of her life since their last meeting. Then Mary told Esther of her engagement and recent marriage to

the prince, whose talents and virtues she lauded to the skies.

Esther shuddered at the mention of the prince, and as Mary continued to recount her praises of his character, she sobbed violently.

"I know the cause of your weeping," said the princess; "but, believe me, your husband shall not suffer."

"And do you think," asked Esther, "that we could be content while our companions and friends were plunged in distress?"

"Then we must contrive a plan whereby you may all be saved. But how can I begin? I dare not interfere in the matter—so I have promised. 'I know these Jews,' said prince Paul, 'they will beset you with entreaties, and your good heart will not be able to answer them in the negative. Give me your promise that you will have nothing whatever to do with them.' And I accordingly promised. What shall we do?—I have it! You yourself, beautiful and talented Esther, must play the advocate's part."

"What is your plan, dear princess?"

"It is simply this.—You are, it is true, a Jewess, but you have the manners of a queen. You are to come here on a visit to me, not as a Jewess, but as a friend of my youth, the 'Princess Jablonska.' You are to dress in the latest Parisian style. The prince will see you with me, and will treat you with every mark of respect. Then, when a favorable moment may offer, you can speak as eloquently as your heart and good sense may dictate, and I know you will not plead in vain. But be quick. You must be with me before Paul returns from the hunt. I shall let my maid in the secret, so that she may not betray us."

A few moments later, a travelling trunk, filled with the choicest of the princess's ward-robe, was placed on Esther's carriage, and she and the maid rode rapidly back to Menachem's house. Having entered, Esther quickly explained matters to her husband, and ascended to her dressing-room, where the clever maid, Cathinka, soon transformed her into a stylish lady of fashion, attired in the extravagant mode of the period. Meanwhile, Menachem had ordered an elegant state-chariot, with liveried

footmen, to be in waiting at the house ; and, shortly after, the neighbors were astonished to see the Rabbi open wide his door, and there politely assist some unknown but wealthy lady—apparently belonging to the nobility,—to enter the elegant carriage.

The prince, on returning to the palace, was immediately informed by his wife of the expected visit of a bosom friend of hers, the Princess Jablonska, who would probably arrive that very evening. Paul had frequently heard mention of the princess, who had been for several years one of the ladies of the court. He expressed himself highly pleased to make her acquaintance, and asked his wife many questions concerning her disposition and appearance, to which Mary, of course, gave willing answers.

At last, the "Princess" arrived. Mary greeted her with a sisterly embrace, and introduced her to her husband, who gave her a cordial and respectful welcome. The prince was enraptured over the distinguished beauty and grace of his visitor. The princess, too, marvelled at the wondrous change which the skillful hands of Cathinka had wrought. Cathinka had indeed accomplished a masterpiece, and in Esther the recollections of her life at the royal palace were suddenly awakened, so that she played the part of a lady of honor to perfection—her own inbred grace and dignity being of no little advantage to her. The three conversed in an animated strain for some time. Esther surprised herself by the facility with which she spoke French—which was then the language of the court. Prince Paul was truly charmed with her grace, beauty and talents. The plan of the princess Mary had thus far succeeded admirably.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION.

During Esther's stay at the palace she had ample opportunity of displaying, before her royal hosts, the rich possessions of her well-stored mind. Under the vigorous, early training of her father, her subsequent liberal education at the palace, her mind had rapidly expanded ; but it was due to the instruction received at a more mature period, at the house of the loving brother and sister, that Esther became instilled so thoroughly in the principles and beauties of the Jewish religion. Urged, as she had expressly been, to embrace Christianity, she felt an uncontrollable desire to be deeply versed in the spirit and laws of her own faith, in order to meet the insidious attacks in future of any zealots that might attempt to convert her.

The present age has the reputation of being a halcyon period, when men and women are educated to a point never before attained ; but, in the good old times, although the lower class, and frequently the nobility, were steeped in ignorance, bigotry and superstition, there were many women, of Esther's stamp, who had studied with an ardor and a success that are strangers to our modern female academies.

The prince took great delight in the vivacity and depth of Esther's conversation, for the time forgetting his passionate love of the chase, and spending every spare hour in the company of the devoted friends. Mary was surprised at the changes which a few years had made in Esther's appearance and manners.

Let us not forget that, at the period to which this narrative has arrived, the sun of tolerance and liberality had not shed its beneficent rays over the world. The overbearing spirit of religious fanaticism, it is true, had somewhat subsided—thirty years of destructive war, waged on account of religious hatred, had taught the nations a severe lesson. Locke and Liebnitz had not yet propounded their theories, nor were Voltaire, Montesquieu

and Diderot as yet in existence. The Israelites alone possessed a pure, holy law, a universal science, which had, centuries before, attained perfection. They were, however, shut up in close Ghettos, where the high walls surrounding prevented the rays of the sun from penetrating their gloomy habitations, and laying bare to the world outside the knowledge and civilization that were there confined.

How then it must have surprised Prince Paul to have heard, for the first time, and from the mouth of a supposed titled lady, such lofty and humanitarian ideas upon the rights and privileges of mankind ; to be told that man was created in the image of his Maker, that therefore all men are brethren, and all have a share in this beautiful world ; that one law is for all, the stranger as well as the citizen ; one Father created us—we are all His children—all civil distinctions arbitrary, but the law of universal liberty divine and eternal !

Prince Paul thought very differently, and so he argued with his fair adversary. Even if originally all men were equal, yet he supposed that ages had raised insurmountable barriers. The common people have deteriorated—the nobility have prospered. In fact, peasants are but little better than brute animals. The world is created for the nobility simply. The peasant was as much his property as his dog or horse, and whatever he acquired was his master's. The Jews, for instance, were allowed to amass property ; but for this purpose—that they might, on some day, transfer their wealth to their rulers.

Esther perceived, by these discussions, what motives had induced a prince, just and brave in other respects, to treat his Jewish subjects in so harsh and barbarous a way. She endeavored to uproot these false ideas, judging that, if the prince could be induced to think differently on such subjects, he would not carry his cruel orders into operation.

"Prince," said she, in a calm voice, "I admit that noble, Jew and peasant are widely distinct from each other ; but this difference does not lie in our natures, but in our faulty education. History teaches us that often men of the humblest position have raised themselves to the highest point in fame."

"Yes, there are exceptions to every rule," answered Paul. "So with Jews, who, I consider, are still lower than the peasants, inasmuch as they are not yet blessed with the light of Christianity."

"But instead of that," Esther quickly rejoined, "they have the brilliant light of Judaism to shed a refulgence upon their path."

"Why, my beautiful princess has not studied Judaism also?" smilingly asked Paul.

"Indeed I have! Living in and around Prince Jablonska's estate are many Jews with whom I am familiar. And should not this ancient people, which has preserved the oldest and noblest truths for mankind, excite our deepest interest?"

"But do you consider," again asked Paul, "that the Jews can adopt the customs of the world, can become nobles in manners, as well as by purchase or birth—that a Jewess can converse and act with such elegance as you do, my dear princess?"

A crimson glow spread over Esther's face, but before the prince had time to notice her growing embarrassment, Mary came to her assistance, and answered the prince's question by asking him :

"Why, have I not told you, Paul, of Esther, my early companion, who saved my life, and was the favorite, for years, at my father's court?"

"You mean the young Jewess who saved you from the serpent, and who perished at the time of the burning of the palace?"

"We were happily in error about her death," answered Mary. "She did not die, but she ran away from the burning palace, disdaining to become wealthy and powerful at the cost of her honor and her ancient faith!"

But the prince, with his odd notions about the heroic Judaism, said : "Bah! shall I tell you why this Jewish child ran off from the palace? It was because her Judaism clung to her in all its low associations. She could not rid herself of its awkward customs, its dialect, its propensities. She longed to return to 'old clothes.' So it has been with the Jews in olden times; so it will be with them always. Nobility and political influence have no attractions for them."

Esther fairly glowed with shame. A hot retort was just breaking from her lips, when Mary asked her husband :

"But, dear Paul, if this Jewess, who had lived six years in a palace, and as many out of it, during which time she had married a Jew, and had borne two children, should now be introduced to you as a fashionable lady of the court, who merely needed a court costume to assume the privileges she formerly enjoyed—"

"Then," answered Paul, slowly and distinctly, his fair auditors being peculiarly excited as to his reply—"then I would avow myself conquered, condemn my ideas as faulty, and myself as prejudiced, and I would at once adopt the opinions of our esteemed Princess Jablonska."

Esther felt her triumph approaching, but Mary had not yet completed her part of the work, so she said to her husband :

"My dear Paul, you must pardon a deception I have been practicing upon you, with the best of purposes. But, before I explain, let me relate to you a little rabbinical story, which I heard years ago, from my friend Esther :

"There was once a nobleman who, before setting out on a little tour, desired to make his wife a suitable present. He bought her a diamond of brilliant lustre, but plainly set, and told his steward to present it in his name to his mistress. Thought this clever steward, 'My lady will not value this present, as it now appears. Let me give it a setting worthy of its beauty, and then I will make a gift worthy of my master!' So he did, and the lady, on receiving the jewel, was struck with its exceeding brilliancy. The nobleman returning, and the steward not caring to expose his little fraud to his master's eye, he one day removed the rich setting, and restored the diamond to its original condition. But his mistress admired it the more when she perceived its undying lustre, which shone as magnificently as before, and she thanked her husband for his precious gift.'

"My dear husband, I was the happy possessor of such a diamond, with which I intended to delight you ; but, that you might value it the more, I preferred to give it a handsome ornamentation."

"I hardly understand you, Mary," said the bewildered Paul.

"Well, my prince, I will at last repeat to you in plain language—I have, thank God, found my dear friend Esther, and I wished to introduce her to you in a way which became her position as a bosom friend of your wife ; but as you would not have considered a Jewess worthy of seeing or speaking with, I have presented her to you as the 'Princess Jablonska!'"

The prince looked at Esther with an incredulous air. She merely bowed respectfully.

"Now that you have learned," added Mary, "to esteem my jewel in an elegant setting—in rich costume and titled as a powerful princess—you will, I am convinced, value it in its lowly dress, as a plain Polish Jewess!"

Naturally this revelation startled the prince somewhat. He was silent for a few moments. At length he said, in a firm tone :

"You have conquered me, and I am compelled to abjure my prejudiced ideas and adopt the more liberal notions of our friend, who is none the less clever, amiable and beautiful, even if she is no longer a princess in reality. Yet there is a nobility which is far above earthly titles, and which we possess directly from God—the nobility of a genuine, fraternal feeling, of love for the good and the true, wherever to be found. Again I bid you welcome!" said Paul, turning to the blushing Esther ; "and I greet you as a friend and as the savior of my dear wife."

The prince now expected Esther to present a petition in behalf of the Wilna Jews, but she prudently refrained from alluding to the subject ; a course of action, on her part, which raised her still more in the prince's regard. Esther and Mary conversed together in low tones, while the prince sat apart, apparently busy with his own thoughts. He felt his position to be a trying one. He wished to say something about his trouble with the Wilna Jews, but he did not know in what way he could best introduce the subject.

After a brief silence, he said aloud : "The thought just strikes me, Mary, that our friend has not yet been rewarded for saving your precious life. Your royal parents

have been unable even to thank her on account of her sudden departure from their protection. Let it be for us then to be grateful. I think, my dear wife, *a hundred thousand ducats* is not too high a price for the life of a princess, especially of a Princess Radzivil. So, dear Esther, I take the greatest pleasure in presenting to you the sum of money which the Jews of Wilna are to furnish me with next week. The money is yours, and you can do with it as you wish."

Esther could not speak. Her mission having so gloriously and unexpectedly terminated, she felt overcome with emotion. Her eyes filled with tears; she fell on her knees and gratefully kissed the extended hands of Prince Paul and Mary. And gentle and loving Princess Mary embraced her husband fondly, saying, as she kissed him: "O, my husband, you have made me the happiest of women!"

The following day, the principal Jews of Wilna, including the Rabbis, were assembled at Rabbi Menachem's house, in accordance with an invitation received from the Rabbi, who had stated to them that, as the time for paying the amount was so near, it was necessary that they should discuss the matter in a calm, rational way. The guests had hardly seated themselves when a carriage stopped at the door, and the prince, princess and Esther, dressed now in her Jewish garb, entered the room, the Jews all bowing low to the ground, as was their custom when in the presence of their rulers.

"I have requested my friend, Rabbi Menachem," began the prince, "to summon you here, in order that I might ask you whether you have taken any steps towards liquidating the amount which I consider is due me from the Jewish community?"

"Your highness," said the chief Rabbi, in a respectful tone, "we are truly unable to collect that amount, without being all reduced to a condition of absolute beggary."

"But to whom does your wealth belong?" sternly asked Paul; "to whom, other than your prince, your ruler?"

"We know that, your highness. We are indeed in

your power, but we trust to your clemency and mercy for relief. Remit half the amount, and we solemnly promise to pay the other half, although even that will be a great sacrifice."

"I will not reduce the amount by a single farthing! By next week, unless you wish to be driven from the country, you must deliver the full amount of one hundred thousand ducats to Menachem's wife. To her I present the money, because she was the savior, and is the dear friend and companion of your princess."

"And my wife," said Menachem, "accepts the gift, but on this condition, your highness, that she may in turn present it to the Jewish community of Wilna, for having redeemed her when she was held a captive in the robber's cave."

Menachem spoke thus intentionally, for he well remembered how strenuously the chief Rabbi, and others of the delegation now present, were opposed to offering any assistance to the captive girl years before. The prince, however, did not notice the momentary confusion into which Menachem's words had betrayed the assembly; but he, of course, assented to the condition, saying, "The money is Esther's, and she can do with it as she pleases."

And with hearts far more joyous than an hour before, the company withdrew to their homes to tell all Wilna the wondrous tale.

Esther thus became the most famous woman in Poland. Her romantic and eventful career was the all-absorbing theme in every household. Parents extolled her virtues and constancy to her faith before their children; prayers were offered for her life-long happiness in all the synagogues; she rapidly became added to the long list of Israel's heroines, and the Polish ladies of the day envied her fame, although all argued that she bore her honors with that same grace and modesty which had characterized her early life.

And Menachem grew into great favor with the court. Prince Radzivil confided in his hands the administration of his vast estate. He and his wife were very intimate in their relations with the prince and his amiable partner, and Paul acquired the most liberal ideas in regard to Judaism and the Jews. Under his rule Wilna prospered,

and the Israelites in that old town became widely respected as an influential, benevolent and pious community.

Meanwhile our Rabbi Sabbathai was prospering in his way at Hollischau. Intent with his duties as pastor of a growing community, he heard little concerning the stirring doings in Lithuania. He studied the law and sacred writings unceasingly, becoming soon known, although hardly fifty years of age, as the "teacher of all Israel." He composed commentaries and religious treatises that have given him undying renown. Under the title of *Schach*, his compositions were made the subject of close study by many a theological scholar.

All over Poland, the name of the *Schach* was uttered with reverence. Invitations crowded in upon him from all sides, to visit different cities, and there expound the law in his own learned way. One day a note reached him from Wilna, and it was couched in such glowing terms that he felt disinclined to refuse the congregational invitation, in the style in which he had declined other requests. Besides Wilna had hallowed associations for him, as being his birth-place, the home of his first marriage, and his brief wedded life. He accepted the call. Great preparations were made among the Jews to give the *Schach* a befitting reception. Rabbi Menachem, as being the most prominent Israelite in town, was selected to be his host during his stay, and heartily glad was the worthy Menachem to entertain so distinguished a visitor.

Rabbi Sabbathai arrived, and was at once conducted to Menachem's house, where a large attendance was gathered in his honor. Mutual greetings were exchanged, Menachem introduced Sabbathai to his guests, who were soon on the best of terms with their visitor; for Rabbi Sabbathai was not only a profound scholar, but a brilliant conversationalist.

And where was Esther? She of course had heard of the expected visit of the *Schach*, had prepared for his coming, and seemed well pleased with the honor of entertaining so learned a visitor. But she had no idea that

he would have raised such sorrowful thoughts within her, as she experienced when she beheld him enter the room. Instinctively her memory reverted years back, to the time when she beheld her father standing a silent mourner by her dead mother's bedside. There seemed to her to be a strange resemblance to her lost father in the person of the dignified Rabbi. What if he should be—but she could no longer remain near him and play the hostess, with such thoughts crowding upon her; so she left the room, unobserved, before Menachem was able to introduce his guest to her, went to her own apartment, and there, unseen by all but the pitying One above, gave vent to tears such as had never, since her marriage, bedewed her cheek. She could not mingle with the gay assembly below. She seemed transported to another age and was a child again, weeping for her dead mother, and the beloved father from whom she had been so early separated.

In the parlor there was great hilarity. Toasts had been drunk in honor of Rabbi Sabbathai, the dignitaries of the town, the ladies, and finally one of the assembly proposed a toast in honor of their guest, Menachem, the "king's son-in-law!"

The toast was responded to with enthusiasm. Menachem was a popular man in Wilna, especially since the Israelites had conferred upon him this title.

Said Sabbathai, "The 'king's son-in-law?' How is that? Why have you, my dear sir, acquired so strange and honorable a title?"

"Why, have you not heard, Rabbi, the wondrous story which we supposed was known to every one in Poland?" said the Wilna Rabbi. "Have you not heard of the almost miraculous manner in which we, here in Wilna, were rescued from paying that enormous tribute to Prince Radzivil, which would have made us all beggars?"

Then, in a few concise sentences, he informed Sabbathai of their trouble, and the timely assistance rendered by the lovely wife of Menachem.

"And how could she be so influential?"

"Why, Rabbi, you are indeed behind the times, if you are not yet acquainted with the story of Esther, the king's adopted daughter, who was brought up in a palace, surrounded by zealous Christians, but remained ever true to

her faith. She saved us—she, the wife of our beloved Menachem ! ”

Sabbathai heard these words with a strange interest. Surely he had heard that story before.

“ But,” he asked, with a trembling voice, “ that Esther perished in the flames of the burning palace ? ”

“ No, thank God ! She escaped ; but was captured by Ratislaw’s robbers, from whom our Menachem ransomed her years ago.”

Sabbathai would hear no more. He raised his hands aloft, tears poured forth from his eyes, and, in a loud voice which startled the assembly by its strange eloquence, and was heard all over the house, he cried :

“ Gracious God ! You have heard my prayer ! My daughter, my Esther, you are found ! ”

And in an instant Esther was clasped in his arms.

Father and daughter were at last united !

Thus ends my story. The subsequent history of Esther and her friends may be told in a few words. Sabbathai returned to Hollischau, unwilling now to desert a town which had sheltered him when he was in need of comfort. He continued in his good work, instructing young Israelites in the doctrines of their faith, and sending forth on the field of life many a faithful shepherd to guide God’s stray sheep into a pleasant pasture. He did not forget Ratislaw, his old friend ; for, some time after his reunion with Esther, he learned, with regret, that the bold robber had been captured and sentenced to death. He at once visited him in prison, spoke to him words of consolation, and promised to use his influence with the king to pardon him, on condition that he would mend his ways and lead a respectable life. Sabbathai and Esther had an interview with the king and prince Paul, with such good effect, that the following morning he again visited the prisoner, handed him his pardon, and with it a commission in the royal army. Ratislaw conducted himself very creditably, rose in the service, and died gallantly fighting at Dniester, where the heroic Pole, John Sobieski, battled victoriously with the Turks.

Esther and Menachem were frequent and welcome visitors at the palace of the king and prince. Mary's love for our heroine continued until the death of the princess severed the life-long tie. Esther and Menachem lived to a good old age ; they never wearied of performing good deeds, and the blessings and prayers of grateful thousands attended their declining years. Descendants of the famous *Schach* are to be found in almost all lands, who still retain, intact, the early traditions of their family, and who, with never-failing memory, transmit to their children the thrilling story of "The Rabbi's Daughter!"







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